

THE FORERUNNER



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THE FORERUNNER

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—GOETHE.

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PART I



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I.

WITHIN the plate-glass front of his office, which bore in new gilt letters his name and the prevalent words "Real Estate," Daniel Devin stood, looking out into the busy street and bestowing some final counsels upon his auctioneer. He had to use the strength of his deep voice, for opposite the window, in a band-wagon drawn up at the curb, a brass band was blaring out in trumpet notes the sentimental strains of "Little Annie Rooney," with a tremendous crash of cymbals in the chorus. The driver of the band-wagon, however, was ready for the start. He had gathered up the reins over the four horses and was looking into the window for his signal. Daniel Devin glanced over the vehicle and the line of omnibuses behind it, all gay with flags, bunting, and signs. A fair number of people had seized the chance offered by the signs, of a free ride and a free lunch, and were already seated in the omnibuses. The procession in its course through the main streets of the city would doubtless gather in a good many more. Devin nodded to the driver, the horses started with a jump which shook some false notes out of the trumpets, the 'buses and the caterer's wagon rolled on in the wake of the band; and the crowd on the

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sidewalk, after a friendly cheer, turned to other occupations.

"Well, I shall proceed then," said Mr. Stoneman, the auctioneer. "I have a few things to arrange, but I'll be at the ranch by the time you are. Somebody wants you at the telephone, I infer."

In fact, the bell on Devin's desk, after several short rings, was now thrilling out a prolonged impatient call.

"All right. Just wait a minute, will you?"

"Certainly, sir," said Mr. Stoneman, taking up his silk hat from a chair and eyeing critically its immaculate gloss. He was a man of bland look and urbane manner; of a portly person, adorned by the dignified black coat, low-cut collar and bow-tie in favor with solid citizens the country over. He looked important, as indeed he might with reason; having so wide a reputation in his art that he had been brought on from the East by a leading citizen some months before, especially to conduct a sale of land. Since then, sales of land in these boom-times had kept Mr. Stoneman busy. He was much in demand; yet his consciousness of that fact never impaired the measured courtesy of his demeanor.

Daniel Devin betrayed much more impatience at the interruption. Snatching the telephone receiver off the hook, he slid into his chair and shouted: "Stop that buzzing, will you? Yes, this is seven-nine-three. Yes—yes, this is Devin. Who are you? What? Oh."

His face and voice underwent a sudden change. He half smiled, biting his lip and raising his eyebrows with a repentant look.

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"Oh, I didn't recognize your voice. How are you?
. . . Yes, I'm all right—rather busy, yes. I'm
going out to the ranch pretty soon—the sale, you
know, this morning. . . . What? . . . I
promised you? . . . But not to-day—won't
some other day——? . . . What? . . . You
want to go? I thought you said . . . oh, I didn't
understand you wanted to go with me. I beg
your pardon, I'm sure. Of course I shall be de-
lighted to take you out. But—the sale, you see,
begins at eleven—I intended to start in about
twenty minutes; I want to get there before the
crowd. . . . You *have* to sing? And I promised
to go and hear you? Well, . . . it will make
me late to the . . . Now don't, you shall go,
of course . . . of course I want you to. . . .
I'll go round there, and then afterward we'll drive
out. . . . Yes, I *want* to do that, of course I
do. And we'll have lunch out there—it will proba-
bly last till the middle of the afternoon. Yes, that's
all settled, then. What time does this show begin?
. . . Well, I'll get round as soon as I can. . . .
Yes, . . . no, you're not. . . . Good-by,
then. . . . Good-by."

The intonations of Dan's voice betrayed him to the auctioneer, who smiled to himself, but met the expected explanation with perfect gravity.

"The fact is," said Dan, laughing in a slightly embarrassed way, "I can't get out early after all. I'd forgotten an engagement for this morning—a rather important one——"

"I understand, sir, I understand," said Mr. Stoneman indulgently. "There are certain contingencies

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in which business must be subordinated. . . . And by the way, Mr. Devin, I trust you will allow me to congratulate you. I read the paragraph announcing your betrothal in this morning's paper. I have had the pleasure—the very great pleasure—of seeing the young lady. I heard her sing at the recent concert at the Opera House. I hope you will allow me to say that I was charmed—delighted. She has a remarkably fine voice, and, if you will pardon me for saying so, she is certainly one of the most beautiful in this land of fair women." Mr. Stoneman's unctuous periods showed a very genuine warmth. In his enthusiasm he offered Dan his hand.

"Thank you—much obliged, I'm sure," Dan said hastily. He shook Mr. Stoneman's kid-gloved hand. "But this rather upsets me—I'd counted on being out here at the start. Of course you understand about how I want the thing to go, but still—nobody can tell what kind of a crowd we're going to have—or whether we're going to have any."

"Oh, Mr. Devin, I wouldn't worry about that," and the auctioneer smiled broadly. "Why, sir, I could go out on the sidewalk and raise a crowd in ten minutes that would buy your property! It isn't a question nowadays to find people to buy, but to find something to sell 'em."

"I'm not worrying much," Dan said. "Still—no lot is to go under a hundred, you know. If they aren't hungry enough for that——"

"Oh, rest easy, sir, we'll bid 'em in. But a hundred—Lord, I'll get a hundred and fifty for the worst of the tract. Why, anyone would think to hear you,

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Mr. Devin, that there was no such thing as a boom in this blessed country to-day."

Mr. Stoneman's speaking countenance was nobly expostulatory. Dan laughed.

"Well, I leave it to you," he said, escorting the auctioneer to the door. "Begin at eleven sharp. I'll be out as soon as I can."

Then he went back to his desk—a new one, large, square and glittering, and elaborately fitted up. Indeed everything in the office, from the Turkish rug on the floor to the paintings on the wall, was new and of the most approved pattern. Dan set to work to finish up his morning's mail; whistling softly a cheerful, tuneless strain, frowning now and then, yet with a very happy look. If he had been a little aghast at Anna's sudden demand on his morning—this morning of all others—he had quickly resigned himself to it. True, he was not looking forward with any particular joy to the time he must spend in the synagogue where Anna—though she was the daughter of a clergyman—sang in the choir. He would even have preferred, perhaps, that the excursion in her company should be deferred to an occasion not complicated by business. But they had been engaged only three days; this was the first thing she had asked of him, and the granting it certainly promised some compensations.

Dan was much interested in the business before him; yet as he ran through his remaining letters, or read over and signed those brought to him by his clerk, his thoughts occasionally wandered; he would catch himself, with his pen suspended, smiling into vacancy, and with a momentary frown would con-

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concentrate again upon his work. But even when he frowned his look was happy. Indeed all his thoughts on this brilliant morning were pleasant ones. He was young, full of life and vigor; he was in love and successful. The consciousness of success and power showed in his resolute, alert face; and joy in life shone in the vivid blue eyes that went with his curling black hair and ruddy color, and in his ready smile.

By the time he had finished his letters there were several people in the front part of the office, studying the large map of the property which was that day to be sold, and waiting to see Dan. His team, too, was waiting outside, and the restive horses had to stand forty minutes before he could get through his business and leave.

Then he went out with a rush, jumped into the buggy and took the reins from the negro driver. The street and sidewalks were crowded, the cable-cars had to go slowly and with much clanging of gongs through the concentrated and congested business part of the city. In many places in this small district building operations further obstructed the way. Frame cottages were being torn down to make way for brick office buildings. Another new hotel was going up. The city was making enormous efforts to house her suddenly increasing business and the crowds of tourists or new settlers that poured in now by every train. And she was happy in doing it. The joy of activity, of expansion, was perfectly visible in the faces of the crowd. It was in the air itself; and that air on a perfect October morning, under a sky as blue as the mountain peaks in the distance, was alone a reason for living.

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Dan, forced to hold down his prancing horses till they had got out of the main street, narrowly missed a collision with a cable-car; then, turning off at the first corner, the team took fright at the sudden bursting into song of another brass band—not Dan's—and, shying, ran past the band-wagon and the procession following. The signs on the 'buses in this case announced a sale of lots out on the heights toward the sea. Dan felt a qualm of anxiety. Those people in the 'buses were so many possible investors drawn away from his own attraction. Still it was a slow day now on which two rival brass bands and auctioneers did not compete for the crowd; and the crowd was generally equal to two such occasions.

All the more, however, Dan wished, as his horses sped along a less busy street, that he could put them now on the stretch of country road leading out to the scene of his auction. But that was quite hopeless. He drove instead to the synagogue and entered with a sigh. It seemed an unusual waste of time to go to church on a fine rushing Saturday morning. Apparently a good many other business-like people thought so too, for though the service had begun half an hour before, the building was almost empty.

Dan looked about him with some interest, noting unexpected points of resemblance to the ordinary church as he remembered it. Surely those colored-glass windows, those lines of straight-backed red-cushioned pews, those decorous ushers in black, were very like what he had been used to see. Dan had not been in a church since he had left the Illinois home

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of his boyhood, but those early impressions were still oddly clear. When a light-haired man in frock-coat and white tie rose from his seat on the dais, came forward to the pulpit and began to read, Dan could imagine himself back in Mapleton. This person had the pompous air and his voice had the nasal intonations of Dr. Brewster, the old Methodist parson.

Vaguely Dan had looked for something different, he hardly knew what, but perhaps more in the line of the Chinese joss-house, which was his sole experience of an alien worship. The Jews he considered to be not only foreigners, but Orientals also, and disliked them as such. It was disconcerting to find them behaving like Christians. He had taken a seat near the door in order to be able to get out easily, and there it was difficult to distinguish what the reader was saying; for, though his voice was sonorous, it had a curiously muffled quality. Dan had just decided that he was speaking English, when he paused, and from the screened choir-loft came a few soft grumbling organ-chords and then a long minor phrase sung in a baritone voice.

Dan looked up, and listened eagerly. In another moment the full choir joined in and he thought he could distinguish Anna's voice; then the soprano had a phrase alone and he was sure of it. He knew that later she would question him and that he would be obliged to produce a certain number of ideas about her singing. He listened, therefore, devoutly. But, as it happened, music never inspired Dan with any ideas whatsoever, except such as he might get from the words of a song if pronounced very distinctly; and in this case, if the choir were pronouncing any

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words at all, they concealed the fact. However, Dan got other things from music—a number of emotions, namely, and a vast amount of sensuous pleasure, all of which might be inarticulate, but were certainly very real. Almost any kind of music would serve him thus, excepting always the purely gymnastic sort, though the simpler it was the better he liked it. As the choir went on, weaving a softly-blended, richly-colored melancholy strain, the cockles of his heart began to warm. His face, uplifted in the direction that the music came from, softened and brightened to its most attractive look.

The far-away Irish ancestor—his station was lost in the mists of antiquity or of obscurity—who had given Daniel Devin his name had also handed down through five generations of New Englanders his main physical characteristics: the powerful, rather stocky build; the black hair which would curl at the ends if allowed to grow a little longer; the blue eyes, showing race and temper; the sanguine complexion and square chin with the hint of a cleft. New England environment and intermarrying had, in fact, left no visible impress on that strong original mould, yet Dan was not to be mistaken for anything but an American born and bred. He looked excitable, emotional enough, to belong to a gayer people. It was the mouth, perhaps, that marked him off from them; this lacked the happy curl that goes with a light heart and an irresponsible head; the corners curved down instead of up.

The choir ceased suddenly, the reader again took up his mysterious theme, and Dan fell from a vague bright region of mid-air to earth. People had kept

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coming in by twos and threes, and the swinging doors at the back now creaked almost continuously. Yet the expanse of pews still looked vacant. Dan had inevitably some business acquaintance among the Jews of the city, and he now recognized one of them—Julius Kahn, a lawyer—in the stout, spectacled gentleman who passed him and, followed by a lady in black satin, proceeded up the aisle. Men and women sat together, and the men did not wear their hats, as Dan had a faint notion they would. Most of the women were dressed in black, but richly, with silks and plumes. There were, in fact, no poor-looking people in the place. Dan, who, as has been said, disliked all foreigners, and who considered a Jew as much a foreigner as a Chinaman (the lowest of created things), looked the audience over, noting the peculiarities he especially disliked. In return for his glances, some, rather cold and unfriendly, were cast at him; but he was not disturbed in the least, having been assured by Anna that there would be no expressed objection to his presence.

The choir sang again, the audience rising, and Dan rose too. Again Anna's voice rang out alone—a full, robust soprano, with depth in the lower register, and a hint of stridency in the upper—with dramatic intention rather than feeling—clear, true and fresh, rather than sweet. The things that Dan liked best in her singing did not come out in this church music. Yet he was irritated when it stopped as abruptly as before and the audience sat down. Quite evidently the music was designed to be simply an accompaniment to the locution of the blond official. Dan began to feel bored. His thoughts went far afield,

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while occasionally a traditional name fell upon his ear—"Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," or something about "Israel"; and his eyes wandered over the reader's desk to the red velvet chairs in semicircle behind it, three on either side of a gilded grating surmounted by an inscription in strange lettering (Dan thought it resembled Chinese) and an arch of gas-lights. The man at the desk read a prayer beginning "Our Heavenly Father"; then a beautiful alto voice, beginning softly, sang a plaintive recitative.

The first notes thrilled Dan. The voice had the emotional quality which was what he cared for in music; it had sweetness and depth, and a kind of tender solemnity. In just those tones, he thought, had his mother been used to sing, when he was a child, in the church choir at Mapleton. Dan had not thought of his mother for a good many days; he made a mental memorandum to write to her. Suddenly he realized that he had news to give that would be important to her—she had no idea that he was going to be married. But then Dan himself had not known it a week ago.

Anna was singing again now, her voice dominating the others with crystal clearness; but Dan began to be restless. He saw that people were still coming in; obviously there was a good deal more to happen. A family procession up his aisle interested him unexpectedly. The two men he knew, in a business way. The leader, short and stout, with slightly bowed shoulders and thick gray hair, was Abram de Ronde, one of the best known and least liked citizens of the place. He was a banker, reputed to be a millionaire even before the days of the

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boom; and now when every tenth man was a millionaire—on paper—he still had a solid pre-eminence. De Ronde did not speculate; but his bank lent money, at high interest and on ample security, to those who did. He was known to be not only very conservative, but also as hard as nails in all business transactions—two qualities apt to be unpopular in a new country, and sure to be so at a time, like this, of generous expansion and general confidence. Moreover, De Ronde was an aristocrat. His fortune had its beginning, not in a New York peddler's pack, but in a Portuguese goldsmith-money-lender's shop, seven generations back. He had traditions to maintain; his generosity to his own race and reserve to all others were points of honor with him. All that Daniel Devin knew of him, however, was that he was a grasping old skinflint, and that he, Dan, owed him a great deal of money, for which he was paying fifteen per cent interest. De Ronde's son, Abram the second, who followed him, was popularly considered a chip of the old block. He was a handsome youth, slightly built, with a pale, rather melancholy face. These attractions were shared by the two young girls who came next, Mrs. De Ronde bringing up the rear. It was easy to see how the children came by their good looks. The mother was still beautiful, though not quite escaping the bane of the women of her race; tall, with a fine stately carriage of the head, and a profile of clear distinction. Daniel, who was exceedingly susceptible to feminine charm, moved to the end of his pew and watched them into their seats. The two girls were beautifully slender and graceful; in them the Oriental was undoubtedly highly pleas-

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ing. But it has been observed that even the most stalwart patriot and disliker of foreigners will make an occasional feminine exception. Dan saw that before De Ronde sat down he turned and glanced down the aisle. He guessed that the banker had recognized him and was displeased by his presence. It was too far away to make sure, but he guessed also that De Ronde's light-gray eyes had the peculiar fishy look that he, Daniel, abominated. During their brief business interviews Dan never looked the banker in the eye if he could help it; and whenever he was obliged to do so he received a renewed impression of the look of a fish—a dead fish, as he put it to himself.

But all these impressions—De Ronde and his women, the singing, even the idea of Anna herself—were like eddies along the margin of a swift stream, or like ripples on its surface. The main current of Dan's thought concerned that business transaction in which he had risked every dollar he owned or could borrow, and the success or failure of which the events of the day would largely determine.

Dan counted surely upon success. He would not admit a doubt. Yet something of the gambler's fever was burning in his veins. He had not slept three hours the night before; but it would take more than one night's restless pillow-punching to dull his eyes or pale his ruddy skin. He looked perfectly fit; and sitting quietly with folded arms he looked perfectly calm, too, though in reality his nerves were on edge.

He now wanted fervently to bolt; and wondered whether Anna could see him from behind the crimson curtains that hid her. He would have to wait for her

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outside; but outside were his horses and the clear, bright October air to move about in. He felt that he couldn't sit still much longer, singing or no singing.

A momentary flicker of interest woke when the three men up in front opened the gilt grating, took out the middle one of three indefinite red-and-gold objects behind it, and, coming forward to the desk again, performed some incantations over it in a heathen tongue, and then kissed the object devoutly. Dan was again irresistibly reminded of his sole comparison, the joss-house, and of the singsong jargon of the despised Chinaman. De Ronde was a heathen, after all—in spite of his air of dignity not really much superior, in point of light, to a miserable Chink! It was, Dan puritanically considered, just as degrading to kiss an object in a red velvet cover as to throw paper pellets at the Joss.

He sighed deeply. There was more singing and reading, and then the joss—or whatever it was—was again imprisoned behind its grating. Then began a sermon. This was decidedly more than Dan had bargained for. He had not the least desire to hear about Moses from an elderly man with an execrable accent and delivery. His skin began to prickle and chills ran up and down his legs—exactly as in the church-going days of his boyhood. To complete his discomfort a woman came in and took a seat directly behind him, rustling in silk upon silk. She was stout; he could tell from the way she sat down. She took off a wrap that rustled fearfully; crossed her knees, first one way and then another, with the peculiar scraping of stiff silk linings. Then she pulled up her skirt and apparently dived into a

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pocket in her petticoat. Her handkerchief shook out a generous odor. Dan liked some strong perfumes, but not musk. Repulsion overcame the feeling, inherited from his boyhood, that it was criminal from a churchly point of view to leave during service, and especially in the course of the sermon. Dan, naturally courteous, disliked to offend these people, but—the musk was really too much. He rose and went out hurriedly, noting that she was atrociously fat and wore one of those shiny bonnets that elderly women affect.

Outside, the air and sunlight were more than ever glorious. Rain had fallen the night before, and the dust of the streets was beaten down. The pepper-trees across the way swept their long, drooping leaves in the light breeze, fresh as a beauty after the bath; and in the little yards of the cottages beyond the heliotropes and rose-bushes were covered with new blossoms.

The horses were not in sight. Dan walked up and down the block. Going south he looked vaguely for the team. Going north he looked up at the great mountain chain twenty miles away shining in the sun with metallic purple and bronze lights, the farthest peak white with snow. Dan had been eight years in California, but he still looked at the mountains, even though, as now, he might be thinking of something else. He walked slowly, with his hands thrust deep in his trousers pockets, jingling the loose gold and silver pieces. He was well dressed in brown tweeds not particularly new, and wore a light felt hat with a brim no wider than might be worn in New York. An objection might perhaps lie against his

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red neck-scarf. But any person so intolerant of flamboyancy as to dislike a red tie would certainly find many other things to dislike about Daniel Devin.

Presently his horses came trotting in a wide, leisurely sweep round the corner. They were "high-steppers," a well-matched pair of bays curried to perfection. As they tossed their uncurbed heads there was a spirited jingle of silver chains. The buggy they drew was new and handsome. The colored groom, attached to the stable where Dan boarded his horses, but practically in Dan's employ, pulled the team up at the curb with a flourish, and started to get out. Dan looked at his watch. "A quarter of an hour yet," he said resignedly; and getting into the buggy he took a note-book and pencil from his pocket and began to work at some figures. The team, however, was loath to stand.

"They're pretty fresh," the groom suggested, "not bein' out at all yestiddy, you see, suh."

"All right, let 'em go—drive round the block," said Dan, absorbed in his arithmetical exercises. So interesting, in fact, were these that he was driven unheeding round not one but several blocks, and only came back to himself at a sudden halt to see Anna standing on the sidewalk in front of the synagogue and looking reproachfully at him. He sprang out and managed to explain before her sense of injury found voice. She then consented to smile. Dan helped her into the buggy, took the driver's seat and the reins, tossed the colored man a dollar, and they were off.

"Thank heaven," he breathed involuntarily. "I thought you would never come."

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"You didn't seem to be looking for me very hard when you came up," Anna said, laughing. Her speaking voice had the freshness and decision of her "dramatic soprano." If it were not good-humored it would certainly be sharp.

"I've been waiting for you for an hour and a half."

"Then you didn't like the singing? I thought you liked to hear me sing."

"So I do. But think of the other things I had to sit through. I haven't been to church for—I guess ten years."

"Then it's time you went. Your soul must be in danger."

"Well, it won't be saved by this morning's experience. I'd hate to be saved in De Ronde's company, anyhow. Almost rather go to the other place."

Anna laughed. "I'm glad you're not religious," she said confidentially, though it was not the first time she had said it.

"Why? So you can convert me to your own particular brand?"

"No—you know why. I've had so much of it. I never want to go to church after—afterward."

"Well, begin now by not singing there any more. Honestly, I wish you would."

"Why? That's different from what I mean. I like to sing in a big place, and I like church music. Didn't you think my voice came out well?"

"Oh, yes. But why should you sing for De Ronde and that crowd? I don't like it."

"Why, you silly boy, I sing there because I can get money for it. I've earned all my own clothes

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and pocket money for a year, as well as my lessons—shouldn't have had any if I hadn't."

"Well, at any rate, that isn't necessary any longer. So give it up, will you please—dearest?"

"Do you really mean it? Why should you care who hears me sing? How funny men are! Perhaps you'd like me not to sing to anybody but you?"

"Yes, I think I would—oh, no, I wouldn't mind if it was in your own house, you know. But what I like best is to be alone when you sing."

"Well, I don't mind that. But surely you don't object to concerts, do you? I mean you wouldn't mind my singing in public occasionally?"

"Yes, I should," said Dan very decidedly.

Anna was silent for a moment.

"Oh, well, very likely I sha'n't want to," she said carelessly.

She looked away at the citrus hedge and walnut plantation spinning by on the left, apparently as composed and good-humored as before. Inwardly, however, she was adjusting herself to a slight shock. This subject, important to her, had not come up for discussion with Dan before. But there were so many things they had not talked over! Had Dan views as decisive about all those other things? She felt a momentary qualm, but it was only momentary. Dan was very much in love. Whatever his words might say, his every tone and look spoke the lover, and proclaimed Anna's power over him. She took courage. If men are not to be ruled by beauty, what is the use of anything? In reality she had as much confidence in her own untried strength as Dan had in his. But hers was to be exercised on Dan; while he

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meant to do something big, in order that Anna might have everything she wanted. To be sure, he had meant to make a fortune before ever he saw Anna. But now there was an infinitely stronger reason for doing so. Anna was the sort of woman, he fondly thought, to be set off by magnificence.

Dan liked what he called style, in women as in horses. He meant physical perfection, conscious of himself. He liked to see a horse prance and curvet. He liked to see a woman carry herself in such a way as to challenge attention to her points. Of course, both the horse and the woman must have the points. Anna had them in abundance. She was very young, but unmistakably already "a fine woman." The generous country of her birth has this faculty of forcing a quick, full maturity, and Anna's type is not uncommon there. At eighteen she had the figure of a well-cared-for woman of thirty. She was tall—a little taller than Dan—and stately as the young palm-tree whose straight woody stem is a trifle too rigid for grace. Her main beauty was her coloring. She was a tawny blonde, with very dark eyes. She wore her light hair curled low on her forehead, and at a little distance the contrast was almost too effective—a little theatrical. It was only on a near approach that one could see how the brown tones of her rosy skin blended the eyes and hair into harmony. Anna sometimes wished that her dark eyelashes had been longer, or that her straight eyebrows had been thicker and continued in a graceful curve instead of ending abruptly short of the corner of the eye. Otherwise she was very well satisfied with herself; and her general expression said as much. Very handsome

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she was certainly; healthy, good-humored; a woman to attract attention and admiration wherever she might be. Dan would be envied, and he thought himself most enviable. To him Anna was the ideal woman; and he was not the person to miss anything because she was already a woman when he wooed her. He thought often of the future, but never with apprehension. That Anna was already in her prime, and could scarcely be imagined to change for the better, suggested no regret to him. That she missed the typical charm of youth, the promise that lies in its meagreness, softness and lack of form, had never occurred to Dan. In fact, though Anna was so much in his mind, he did not definitely think much about her.

The bays were making fast time over the sandy road between orchards of orange or lemon trees, or rows of poplars and eucalyptus, but not fast enough for Dan. He looked at his watch and urged them on, as they passed "Keyser's place," which was half-way to their destination. Keyser's was one of the oldest ranches in the district; its avenue of pepper-trees had been twenty years growing, and it boasted an orange orchard and vineyard as old. Part of the establishment was a winery, where Dan had sent his own grapes, during his brief experience as a fruit-grower. He pointed out to Anna the roof of the winery as they sped by.

"Oh, I know that place," she said. "We had a church picnic near here once. They were crushing the grapes then, and you could smell them about half a mile away. It made some of us dizzy. Not just the place for a church affair, was it!"

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Talk became more difficult as the team's speed increased. The clots of sand flew still thicker from their flashing hoofs, and Anna drew up the lap-robe to protect her gray silk, the best dress she had, though an unbecoming one.

"It will be past noon by the time we get there," Dan said rather anxiously.

"Couldn't they have waited for us?"

"Hardly. The auction was advertised for eleven, you see, and—well, the crowd mightn't have stayed."

"Oh, I hope they haven't gone yet—I've never seen an auction. Don't you?"

"Yes, I do," Dan said grimly.

Anna had no idea of the importance of that crowd to Dan, no idea that the auction involved anything serious; naturally enough, since Dan had painted the situation to her in the brilliant colors in which he normally saw it. Anna thought she was simply going to be a witness of her lover's success. If this auction of Dan's land sold to the amount he expected, he would make six times the money he had put into it a month ago; so much she knew. There was an element of risk about which she knew nothing; but this risk was less than it would have been in any other than the extraordinary conditions then prevailing. Dan was not alarmed, but his nerves were tense. He took out his whip, almost never used, and slashed the off-horse sharply; the horse reared and the team broke into a run. It took all the strength of Dan's brown hands to bring them down again, but he was glad of the exertion. Anna was silent, protecting her face as well as she could and holding her broad white hat on; they brought up with a whirl at the turning

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which led through a wide gap in the cypress hedge and over a zanja bridged with planking into the ranch.

The driveway was a good deal marked up by fresh wheel-tracks and hoof-prints, and Dan noted the favorable sign.

To the right was the low gray house, a scanty lawn set with large rose-bushes separating it from the road. Dan looked sharply at the windows as he drove past them, but there was no sign of any member of the Emmons family either about the house or in the "backyard"—a stretch of hard-beaten ground under a large pepper-tree which was the children's playground.

To the left the orange orchard stretched away in even rows. At this season of vernal revival after the first rains the ranch should have been at its best, but instead it showed plainly the effects of neglect. The owner had spared the trouble of ploughing and irrigating during the last half of the dry season. The fall pruning had not been done and the citrus-trees and hedges were straggling out of shape, while the grape-vines beyond were covered with long waste shoots. Weeds speckled the ground all the way from the first rows of English walnut-trees through the orchard and the vineyard, and grew almost visibly in the hot sun. And the trails of the busy gopher were everywhere, long runs above the surface showing where he had bored below from the roots of one orange-tree to another.

These trees, ten years old and in full bearing, were heavy with fruit just beginning to turn, but doomed to wither and rot uselessly. And the reason was ap-

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parent in a plentiful crop of white stakes set at regular intervals among them; and in the gathering of vehicles which extended from the tank-house to the barn, and the men densely packed about the auctioneer's stand under a great live-oak tree. Dan drew a deep breath of relief. With a crowd like that—bigger than he had dared to expect—success was practically sure.

II.

HE drove round the circle, going out into the orchard to pass it, and drew up under the farther oak-tree, where the caterer and his assistants were setting out the lunch on long tables made of planks and trestles. A brief conference satisfied Dan that there would be enough food to go round, and he was then free to listen to the orotund voice of Mr. Stoneman, who, leaning over the stand, with his silk hat tipped a little back on his head, was apparently on the best possible terms with himself and his audience.

"Two hundred and fifty," he was saying. "If you want that lot, Mr. Feltner, you can do a little better than that. Two-fifty—two-fifty,—why, gentlemen, the owner of this lot can go back to town and sell it this afternoon for probably double that price. You know that as well as I do. You know that people are standing in line all night to get a chance to pay down their money for land not half so good. Two-seventy-five—thank you, Mr. Feltner——"

"Three hundred," said an anxious man in the front rank.

"Three hundred—this lot, as you see, has a frontage of fifty feet on what will be one of the main streets of this fine suburb. You know, gentlemen, what city lots are selling for now—you know how soon a city like ours swallows up its suburbs—like ah, ha—Minos

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devouring his own children—three hundred dollars—three hundred—really I hate to see a chance like this going so easily. It looks as though I hadn't made things clear to you. Three hundred—three hundred—going, going—sold at three hundred dollars to Mr. Bragg."

The gavel fell.

Mr. Stoneman turned and bowed to Dan, removing his tall hat for a moment, and motioned his assistant to turn the large cloth map of the property round. A glance showed Dan a very encouraging proportion of squares marked with the pencil cross which meant "sold." He smiled and nodded carelessly.

"I don't think we'd better get out," he said to Anna; "the team won't stand."

"This is very nice," she said. "But I thought there'd be more excitement!"

Dan shook his head, smiling. He was listening to the bidding. Several men wanted the next lot offered. The auctioneer ran the price up to four hundred and fifty dollars, and the successful bidder took the two inside lots at the same price. Dan might have said with justice that there was no need of a brass band, or of "cappers" to stimulate enthusiasm, with a crowd in such a temper as this transaction showed. While the assistant was marking the corresponding squares on the map, Mr. Stoneman stepped down from his stand and came over to Dan's side of the carriage.

"Going pretty well," said Dan.

"I *should* say so. Look at this, Mr. Devin."

He handed Dan a memorandum of prices and buyers.

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"Miss Quartermain, this is Mr. Stoneman, the best auctioneer in the country," said Dan.

Anna smiled, and Mr. Stoneman, snatching off his hat, made a deep if not very graceful bow.

"Most happy to meet you, I'm sure," he murmured. "I suppose, Miss, this is not your first experience of a land-sale."

"Yes, the first," Anna said.

"Well, some day when you drive through this section and see it covered with brick buildings and dwelling-houses, with cable-cars running through what are now only strips of red gravel road, it will doubtless interest you to recollect that you saw it when it bore only orange-trees and grape-vines."

"Do you think this will be a part of the city?" she inquired incredulously. "Why, it's three miles away."

"And what are three miles to a city growing at the rate of ours? Why, Miss, the city limits are but one mile north of us now, and I predict that in a term of five, or perhaps four or three years, this district will be entirely built up. It will then be worth per acre a hundred times what these enterprising gentlemen have paid for it to-day."

"Right you are, Mr. Stoneman," said Daniel gravely, as he handed back the memorandum. "They're getting it dirt-cheap, considering. However, we may as well let them have a little more, since they want it."

The auctioneer bowed himself off, and went back to his chair; and another parcel of land was put up and speedily bid off.

"Is it interesting?" Dan asked, smiling. He took

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off his hat and leaned back in the seat, the reins drooping from his right hand. He was at ease now and elate. Anna had finished brushing stray grains of sand from her dress and adjusting her hat. She glanced over the crowd, prosperous, well-dressed and cheerful, calmly encountering the gaze of a good part of it.

"Yes, rather. I don't see anybody I know. Do you?"

"Yes; about half of them. The others are Easterners, I reckon, that got into town yesterday or the day before. They'll expect to sell out next month, and go home, with enough profit to pay their expenses; that is, the tourists do. There are plenty of them that will stay with the game, though."

"It seems like an easy way to make money," Anna sighed.

"Well, it ought to be easy to make money with a country like this. All you've got to do is to get in line."

"We never thought the country was so wonderful till the Easterners discovered it," she said. "I always thought Los Angeles was a pretty poky place. It's lucky for us that the boom happened along!"

"It didn't happen along," Dan corrected her. "It was bound to come. Why, this place has just begun to grow. It's going to be one of the richest cities in the United States."

He had a quietly emphatic way of making such a statement, an air of having inside information on the subject, and of being able to back it up with unlimited details, that usually conveyed something of his own confidence even to the masculine hearer.

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As for Anna, she wanted nothing better than to believe him. And she was dazzled by this very air of his, by his buoyant energy and easy assumption of success as natural and inevitable. It was to this essentially masculine strength, as she thought it, that she had gladly yielded. Anna had been used to regard herself as the one bright spot in a dull, monotonous world. But Dan was as brilliant in his way as she in hers. There were no low tones about him. She was proud of him. She liked his striking appearance, his good clothes, above all his look of competence and of being equal to any situation. And she knew exactly why she liked him; knew that it was the feeling of his power and effectiveness that attracted her. Certainly the desirable husband must have that easy superiority to circumstances.

But, after all, there was more than this in the mind of the maiden of eighteen. Even though that mental atmosphere was clear and dry like the air above a desert, there hung a blue haze on its horizon. There was the unknown; and in spite of herself she felt its mystery. When she thought about Dan, away from him, she was clear enough; but when she was near him she was sometimes rather tremulous. Dan thought those occasional quavers and blushes delicious; but if he took them for signs of a ready response to his own emotion he was mistaken. Anna was not loving; if she was to love she must be won as slowly and patiently as the desert itself is won to fertility. But who is to guess at such a necessity looking upon a beautiful young creature, of the most utterly feminine mould, who seems created only to charm? Certainly not a lover like Dan.

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Taking advantage of the fact that his broad shoulder partly screened Anna from observation, Dan laid his hand on hers; she, with a prompt feeling for propriety, evaded the caress, but with a smile and blush that made amends.

"Don't, they can see. I suppose they wonder who on earth I am, anyway."

"Let them wonder. I'm glad to have them see you. You're looking lovely—not that that's anything unusual, though."

"But I shouldn't think you'd like other people to look at me, Mr. Bluebeard! What's the difference between that and hearing me sing?"

"Well, there is a difference. Of course you can't help people looking at you, any more than the sun can! But when you sing to them, well, it seems as though you were giving them something, some part of yourself—that's the way I feel."

"Well, *I* don't feel that way, not in the least. And I ought to know, don't you think so? But let's not quarrel about that now. How much longer will this last?"

"Why, you're not tired already, are you? I thought you'd like to see how we're making our fortune."

"Oh, I do, of course. But as long as we are making it, that's the main thing." She said it laughingly, but expressed her feeling notwithstanding. The result to be attained interested her tremendously, the process not at all.

"And after I spent an hour and a half in that confounded church to please you!" cried Dan in mock reproach. "Do you really want to go?"

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"No—but I'm getting hungry. We have breakfast at daylight, almost."

"Oh, well, if that's all. I've got some stuff here in the wagon—some chicken and champagne and so on. I took it for granted you'd want to see it through. I'll tell Stoneman to stop pretty soon and let the crowd feed, and you and I'll go up to the house—that is, if we can get in."

"Champagne? I never tasted it!" Anna cried gayly. "This is really a picnic!"

Dan would not of himself have chosen this occasion for a picnic; and secretly he would now have preferred to stay on the ground, where he could, if necessary, direct the auctioneer. But he was not as loath to go as he might have been if Mr. Stoneman had been less than equal to his reputation or the crowd less eager. His presence was not necessary; as for stopping for lunch while the bidding was still brisk, he thought it a good move, and Mr. Stoneman agreed with him.

"The best men here—General Rose, and Sepulveda, and old Baldwin—have gone in strong," whispered the auctioneer. "Just as well to let the rest of 'em reflect on that for a few minutes. And they're hungry, too. I've seen three look at their watches in the last five minutes. This air's enough to make you eat your boots if you hadn't anything else handy. Confess I'd like a bite myself. I'll do better after lunch, and they will too, I guess."

Accordingly, after Dan had seen that the "free lunch" was ready and plenty for the crowd, he drove back to the house. It was apparently shut up and deserted.

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"It looks as if Emmons had gone away for the day to avoid us," Dan observed. "I know they haven't left for good yet."

"Why should he? Doesn't he like seeing his place cut up and sold?"

"Oh, I hardly think he has much sentiment about that. You see, he hates me," Dan said easily, stepping out of the buggy. "I'll just see if I can raise somebody. If not we'll eat our lunch on his porch, anyway. Take the reins a minute,—they won't run. Whoa, Tom—stand, Jerry!"

He went up the single step to the narrow porch, which ran across the front of the house and was covered with Lamarque rose-vines in blossom. From where she sat in the buggy Anna could have reached an armful of the white pink-hearted blossoms. Turning to keep an eye on the horses, Dan knocked at the door, and after a moment's delay it was opened by a small woman in black.

"Oh, Mr. Devin," she said with a faint smile, putting out a thin hand, red and rough from work. "Won't you come in?" she added, but with some hesitation. "I'm all alone. Frank has taken the children to town."

"I'd like you to meet Miss Quartermain," Dan said, and in a lower tone, smiling happily, "I'm going to be married."

"Oh, I'm glad—I shall be most pleased," cried Mrs. Emmons, looking up into his face with a pale reflection of its brightness. "I'm so glad for you."

She went out to the side of the carriage with Dan, and he performed the introduction.

"I'm very glad to meet you. I've known Mr.

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Devin ever since he was a boy—you know, we came from the same town in Illinois,” Mrs. Emmons said, looking up admiringly at the radiant girl.

Anna smiled and murmured something indefinite.

“Won’t you come in? You might like to rest a little,” Mrs. Emmons then said rather nervously.

Dan understood what was back of this nervousness—her husband’s feeling toward him; but as he had only a serene contempt for Emmons, whereas he liked Mrs. Emmons and thought she still liked him, he agreed promptly.

“In fact, we came to invite ourselves to lunch,” he said with the utmost cheerfulness, “and even went so far as to bring the lunch with us. I’ll leave Miss Quartermain with you and put the horses in the barn——” Then something in her manner checked him. “I hope we aren’t putting you out—now you must say so if we are——”

“Oh, no——”

She was certainly looking ill, Dan thought—much older and thinner than when he last saw her, which, to be sure, was several years ago.

“You’re all alone, are you?” he asked, a little uncomfortable. “I’d hoped to see the children. I hope they’re all well.”

“Oh, yes.” The tears rose to her eyes. What ailed her, Dan wondered helplessly.

“And the little chap—my boy—he must be a big fellow now——”

Mrs. Emmons gasped, stared at him and caught at his arm.

“Oh,” she cried, “you know, don’t you?”

“Know what?” said Dan, turning red.

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"Why, Dan, he died—he died four months ago,"—she burst out crying, hiding her face in her hands.

Dan cast an imploring look at Anna, then put his arm about the weeping woman and took her into the house. From the narrow entry opened on one side a small sitting-room in which the family took their meals. There was an old horse-hair lounge in one corner that Dan remembered well. They sat down on that.

"Emmons never told me—he never said a word about it, though I've seen him twice in the last month," said Dan, his voice trembling. His face was flushed and his blue eyes shone fiercely. "He knew I was fond of the little chap—why should he treat me so! And you thought I knew?"

Mary Emmons nodded, groping for her handkerchief. Dan's agitation calmed her. She looked up to see his tears and her own ceased to flow.

"But I knew you would feel it," she said.

"But you wondered why I never came—you must have thought——"

"No. I thought perhaps it was the trouble with Frank——"

"No, you thought I was a heartless brute not to come. Poor little Allie, poor baby—don't you remember how fond he used to be of me? He was three when I saw him last; and I would have come to see you and him often since then—if it hadn't been for Frank. You know it."

"Yes, I know it. I know you are good and kind." She spoke almost triumphantly, and took Dan's hand in both hers. "He died of pneumonia—he was only sick three days. He stayed out one night with

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his father, when they were irrigating the orange orchard—and you know he inherited weak lungs, anyway.”

She finished in a hard tone, and, setting her lips together, stared at the floor. Dan felt instantly that she blamed her husband, indirectly at least, for the boy's death, and his heart leaped with sympathy for her. He was silent, thinking of the child that he had loved, and of the time when he had lived in this house.

It had not changed in the six years since then; Emmons had not even painted it. The cheap paper on the walls was actually the same. Dan remembered every piece of the scanty furniture—the black walnut table covered with a red figured cloth, the cane-bottomed chairs, the sewing-machine always piled with work, the old lumpy lounge, the worn carpet, the little stove that they used on rainy days, that would get red-hot and smell of blacking. Next to this room was the bedroom that used to be his—just big enough for the cheap yellow-painted bed, bureau, wash-stand and one chair. There were two other tiny bedrooms, where the Emmonses and their three children had slept; and the kitchen where Mary Emmons's days had been mainly spent, and doubtless were now.

Dan remembered the occasion of his first open quarrel with Emmons; that was about four months after he had come out from Illinois, at Emmons's suggestion, to invest his few hundred dollars in a third interest in the ranch, and to give his time and energy to develop it. From the very first they had disagreed. Emmons was consumptive, a thin-

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blooded, cautious, careful man, ten years Dan's senior. Dan was twenty-two; full of large ideas that were of his time, and of spirits and energy that were all his own. He immediately saw golden prospects in the fruit farm, but they must branch out, put in more money, get some new ploughs and horses. Emmons negatived every such proposition.

Then one day, angered at the sight of Mary, frail and weak, working in the hot kitchen—she did all the work of the house, besides the care of the two children, with another one expected—Dan had gone to town, and brought out a Chinaman, whose wages were to be thirty dollars a month. Emmons had bitterly refused to pay any part of this new expense, and Dan paid the Chinaman for three months. Then Mary herself—when the baby was two months old—insisted on dismissing him. Dan, when he was about the house, would often take care of the baby, and so grew fond of him. But the final break with Emmons came when Dan had been on the ranch but eighteen months. He felt himself that he was not cut out for a small farmer. He gave Emmons the alternative of buying his interest at the price he had paid for it, or of selling his own two-thirds to Dan, who intended to raise the money to pay for it on a mortgage. Emmons explosively damned both propositions and termed Dan's conduct dishonorable. He held that Dan had agreed to manage the business of the ranch, it being understood that he was not to wreck it. Dan pointed out that he was not bound by any agreement for a specified length of time and that when he had taken the management of the ranch he had expected to have some control. By "management," on the

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other hand, Emmons understood practically an overseer's work.

The end of it was that Emmons secured a new partner who bought Dan's interest; and the two men parted very bad friends. Dan considered Emmons a fool and an old foggy, and carelessly dismissed him from his mind; while Emmons thought Dan plainly dishonest, and was tenacious and voluble of his injuries; and bad accounts of Dan went back to his home town, Mapleton, while he on his part wrote nothing of the matter at all in his infrequent letters to his mother, except that he had parted from Emmons.

Dan had never felt so bitterly toward Emmons as he did now. When the boom in land began to reach out into the country and he conceived the idea of buying part of Emmons's ranch, which had not paid well, to sell it again in town lots, he had even felt pleasure in being able to throw a chance in Emmons's way. He had paid him in cash, as half payment, more than Emmons had originally paid for the whole ranch; and had given his note at ninety days for the rest. Dan had felt an easy pity for the poor, plodding fellow who still hated him—but now he was conscious of something very like hatred in return.

Outside the open window where the rose-vines shut out light and air the horses began to stamp and Anna called rather sharply,

"Dan! I can't hold them much longer!"

He sprang up.

"I must go, but I'll come to see you again——"

"We're going away, you know—back to Mapleton," Mary said, rising too.

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"I didn't know. How soon?"

"Oh, in about two weeks."

"And you're glad? You used to be so homesick."

"I know. Yes, I want to see my folks. But now—I have to leave *him* here—you understand?"

"Yes. . . . I'll come out to see you before you go. God bless you."

He bent to kiss her cheek, hurried out and got into the buggy.

Anna released the reins without a word. The rose in her cheeks was decidedly brightened, perhaps by exertion, for the team was pulling hard. Dan gave them their heads and they whirled down the driveway and out into the road like a flash.

"I beg your pardon for keeping you like that," said Dan humbly; "but that poor woman—I couldn't leave her for a few moments——"

"I was frightened—they almost ran away with me," Anna said indignantly.

"I'm awfully sorry—but you heard, didn't you? Her child had died and I didn't know it. I asked for him. . . . I used to be very fond of him when he was a baby. . . . I always sent him a present at Christmas. Emmons knew that, he knew . . . and he never told me! The infernal mean ——"

Dan choked. The off-horse shied violently at a newspaper blowing across the road. Dan snatched out the whip and slashed him; then, with a savage jerk at the reins, pulled him back into the road. Anna looked at Dan in astonishment.

"Why are you so rough?" she asked chillingly.

"Am I?—forgive me, dear. I'm rather upset, you

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see. All this is uncomfortable for you, I know. But you will forgive me, won't you? You've got to!"

He threw his arm around her, pressed her close and kissed her.

"What a bear!" Anna cried as she put her hat straight—but she smiled.

"And what about the auction? Aren't we going back?"

"Do you want to? You can see now what it's like. I thought you wouldn't want to be mixed up in the crowd."

"But I thought you had to be there . . .?"

"Oh, not with things as they're going now. It's all right. I'm not needed. And I want to be with you, my beautiful girl—I can't think about business now!"

III.

THE expedition ended rather grayly for Anna, in a family luncheon at her home. Dan had suggested going to a downtown restaurant, but with the proviso that he must leave her immediately afterward, to meet Mr. Stoneman on his return. "So perhaps we'd better wait till another day, when I'm free," he added.

"Is there any such day?" Anna asked. "But yes, I suppose we'd better wait. I'll go home, then."

"And you'll give me a bite of lunch, won't you? I'll contribute that chicken and champagne."

"Good heavens, don't mention champagne in our house! I believe my parents would forbid the banns!"

"Oh, I forgot. Well, I sha'n't miss it. Champagne in the middle of the day is something new to me. But I thought you might like to try it."

"Oh, I should. And I will when—when I can do as I like." Anna brightened at this general prospect.

"Now's my chance," said Dan, pulling the horses down to a walk, for they were turning into Figueroa Street, where Anna lived. "Wouldn't you like to begin doing as you like right away?" he demanded.

Anna made no reply, but seemed to be pondering the question.

"Why shouldn't we be married at once?" he pursued.

"At once——?"

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"I mean in a few days. I suppose women always have to have some time for fussing and fal-lals. But you can get all those afterward, you know. Say a week from to-day."

"Oh, I couldn't get ready by then," Anna protested. "I must have one dress."

"Well, can't you get one dress in a week? Surely you can, dearest. Or if not, what's the difference? We'll go right up to San Francisco, and there you can get all the frills you want."

Dan stopped the team—they were within a few doors of Anna's home—and appeared determined not to go on till he had his answer. And Anna looked straight before her pensively; her eyes shone and her lips curved; she was a sweet image of maiden happiness.

"I don't know what father and mother will say," she said finally. "You'll have to ask them."

"I will. But it doesn't matter what they say, does it? This is our affair, you know."

Anna laughed in the consciousness that this was perfectly true. She was not much subject to her parents; and she was altogether glad to be leaving their household for one where things would certainly be better ordered. Dan understood. He drove on, feeling that everything was coming his way.

The little house in which lived the Reverend James Allen Quartermain and his family was almost on the outskirts of the town. It stood where the broad, paved street, lined with large, prosperous houses set in sweeps of green lawn and shaded by a fine double row of pepper-trees, began to narrow and break up into the country road. The cottage itself was one of

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a number in the so-called Queen Anne style, which certainly owed its popularity to no kind of fitness or harmony with its surroundings. It was a little box of a place, a story and a half high, painted in two shades of brown, shingled half-way down, and dotted with a strange eruption of gables, peaks, and odd-shaped windows filled with colored glass. It had a small porch, up which climbed a Maréchal Niel rose-vine, heavy with yellow blossoms. There was a tiny lawn of coarse grass, along the sides of which grew rows of calla-lilies, and instead of a fence a cypress hedge, bright and untidy with new shoots.

The place did not belong to Mr. Quartermain. It was the fourth house Anna had lived in; though she had been born, and spent all her eighteen years, in the same town. The three others had been like unto this—small, ugly, and rented. Inside was the furniture that Anna had vainly hoped each year to see the last of; in the parlor, for example, a flowered carpet and wall-paper, an old square piano, a set of sofas and chairs upholstered in worn brown plush, two marble-topped tables, and a good deal of bric-à-brac, including a number of paintings, one on an easel, by Mrs. Quartermain. But this room represented her taste entirely; Mr. Quartermain never entered it if he could help it. He had his study and books in the little church near by, and there read and wrote, when not on active duty or abroad upon his pastoral business; coming home mainly to eat and sleep, and not doing either of these very heartily.

Dan hitched his horses, which by this time had worked off their superfluous spirits, to the post in front of the house, and carried in the basket of eat-

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ables. Anna took this from him at the door and ushered him into the parlor, where in a moment the head of the house joined him. This was the first time that Dan had seen his future father-in-law alone; but now they had some time to make one another's acquaintance, for a guest at meals was a rarity in the household, and involved much perturbation and rushing to and fro between kitchen and dining-room on the part of Mrs. Quartermain, who kept no servant. Anna usually did the lighter part of the housework, and she was now instructed to get out the best table-cloth and the scanty best china and set the table, not forgetting a bouquet of flowers in the centre, and the cut-glass butter-dish and salad-bowl. She performed this task languidly, listening the while to the amicable murmur of talk on the other side of the folding doors.

The introduction of Dan to her family had caused her some uncomfortable moments; in particular the thought that he ought to be asked to a meal. It was now two months since Dan had heard her sing at a public concert of the musical club she belonged to, and got himself presented to her; and he had been calling on her with great and increasing frequency ever since. But he had not been asked to break bread with the family. Anna felt that he must think it queer, especially when it became understood that they were engaged; but she had hung back from asking him. Now she was glad that it had come about in this perfectly informal way, though she disliked the prospect of the next hour; and now, at least, Herwin would not be there. Herwin was her brother, two years older than herself, and—they all admitted

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it—a bad lot. At present he had a position as book-keeper in the *Clarion* office; too far downtown to come home for lunch. It was because of his failing that even the mention of spirituous things was tabooed in the family circle, as Dan had been warned. Anna wondered what they were talking about, her father and her lover. About her, perhaps. They seemed to be getting on very well. The murmur of voices—now Dan's deep, decisive tones, now her father's, slower, slightly husky, but musical—was continuous.

The voice in both cases fitted the physical presence. Mr. Quartermain was a faded aristocrat in looks—a slight man who would have been above middle height but that he stooped, with a beautifully shaped head, light silky brown hair and beard, a delicate skin, through which the blue veins showed on his temples, and on his long, fragile hands. His eyes were deeply melancholy; there were fretful lines about them. The look of oppression, of harassing care, marked his whole figure and was now, indeed, become a physical habit. Yet even now he could throw it off at times, when his native temperament could have sway—generally in the pulpit, for there alone he was really free. His imaginative eloquence was profoundly religious—but it was the religion of the solitary. He could have been a hermit living in a mystic glow of emotion. Locusts and wild honey might have satisfied the demands of the flesh upon him; and he would have poured all his fervor into the joys of the spirit. But, alas, he lived in the world of the butcher and the grocer; his salary, even when it was paid, somehow never paid the bills. Religion helped him to

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bear his son's misconduct, but it did not reconcile him to being dunned by tradesmen.

Anna knew better than he why the tradesmen were seldom paid; also why their accounts, taken by the month, were so small. Her mother scrimped on food, light, and fuel for the household, and handed over every cent she could thus save to Herwin. Anna had discovered this two years before, and her mother, weeping, had made her promise not to tell her father. Anna kept her promise, but blamed her mother's weakness and her father's blindness for this wrong and injustice. She hardened to them both as well as to Herwin. Naturally the family life was not a happy one.

Mr. Quartermain knew that he had no hold over his children. In Anna's case he felt it without knowing the reason; she grew up suddenly and all at once shook off impatiently even the hint of control or advice. She had not asked parental permission to marry. When Daniel Devin had been coming to the house for a month or more, Mrs. Quartermain one night followed Anna into her little bedroom and hesitatingly said:

"Mr. Devin comes here a good deal, Anna."

"Yes. He wants to marry me," was the cool reply.

"And—have you—do you——?"

"Yes, I think I will."

"You ought to tell us more about him, Anna! We should know before you think of such a step——"

"No, I don't think so, mother," Anna had said gravely, "I'll tell you everything I know about him, of course. But I shall decide for myself."

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Mrs. Quartermain wept at that; and Anna felt the ungraciousness of her own attitude, but hardly said to herself that she couldn't help it. Her main feelings toward her parents were irritation and something very like contempt, and one of her main characteristics was candor. She could not pretend to meet her father's timid advances on this occasion with confidence. She told him the bare facts about Daniel Devin as she knew them; that he was born in Illinois and had come from there to California eight years ago; that he had been in business, first in the orange ranch, next as a business manager for the *Clarion*, then in real estate; that he was well-to-do.

It was not the part of such a parent as Mr. Quartermain to cross-examine the suitor himself. At least, though he had a dim feeling that he ought to have a serious conversation with Devin, he was quite unable to begin it. Therefore when Mr. Quartermain shook hands with Dan and welcomed him with nervous cordiality, there was embarrassment on both sides; for Dan, too, felt that something must be said. With one accord they plunged into a discussion of the real-estate situation; if that may be called a discussion which was really a monologue on Dan's part, punctuated by an occasional vague question from his host.

Dan had not meant to begin talking about himself, but in accounting for his unexpected return with Anna, he spoke of the auction, its success, and the general rapid progress in the building up of the country by means of similar sales.

"Ah, yes—people call it the boom, don't they?" asked Mr. Quartermain.

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He had the haziest ideas of the state of the country in general, and of real estate in particular.

"Boom, yes—in a sense it is," Dan promptly responded. "Certainly the town is booming as most people never expected to see it. Crowds coming on every train, most of them to settle here—houses, hotels, office-buildings going up by the hundred—yes, it is a boom. But usually when people use that word it means a sudden thing that doesn't last—like some of the mining towns, you know, that have been built up in a few weeks—and never grow afterward. This boom isn't that sort; it's here to stay. And if people never saw anything like it—why, they never saw a country like this, either. It's a wonderful country. We're just beginning to see its possibilities. For years people thought that about all it had was climate. You know how everybody talked about the climate and made most of their money out of the tourists that came out here to sample it. Now we've got a long way past caring about tourists. What we want now is actual settlers, with money in their pockets and a determination to help make this section what it's bound to be—one of the richest in the whole country." Dan's fluency was breathless.

"You say 'we'—I infer that you have identified your interests, to a large extent, with those of the country," said Mr. Quartermain.

"I feel as though I belonged to it," was the quick response. "I like everything about it—the bigness of it, and the feeling of newness. There are chances that you don't get back East. It's too crowded there. You can't move without brushing up against

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some fellow—in a business way, I mean. Here you can get your start, at least, before the crowd gets in. Yes. I hope to stay here for some time to come. I don't know of a better place for a home."

Dan's voice quavered a little on the last sentence. He reddened, drew a long breath, and was about to broach the important subject when the interruption came. Anna opened the folding-doors and asked them to come out to lunch.

It was not a gay meal, but they got on well enough, Dan and Mr. Quartermain contributing most of the talk. Mrs. Quartermain, a plain, eager-faced woman of solid figure, had a constrained manner of speaking and smiling. She devoted herself to carving Dan's cold chicken, and circulating the other eatables. Dan said to Anna—he went away immediately after the meal, and she walked bareheaded out to the street with him—that he thought her mother looked unhappy.

"And I guess she has a grudge against me for taking you away," he added.

"No, she's glad," said Anna, positively. "She knows I'm not happy at home."

The tears rose to her eyes. She had a kind of pride, which would have impelled her, if possible, to conceal that fact, but she couldn't do it. She was keenly sensitive, however, to the impression that Dan might have received.

"I liked the old gentleman very much," he said. "But I felt sorry for him. He's too fine, I guess, to get on in this world. . . . I didn't get a chance to tell him—I was just going to when you came in—but it's settled anyway, isn't it? In a week? I can

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get away so much better then—later I shall have to be here right along.”

Anna would not give a definite answer. Vaguely she resented the mention of business then, the idea that Dan could think of it in connection with the more momentous affair of the wedding. And yet the main thing she admired in him was this very practical turn. A man who had not the ability to make the world serve him might be as fine as he liked, but he would not have appealed to Anna. No, it was right that Dan should be devoted to business—up to the point where her own claims might interfere. Naturally, she doubted nothing that these claims would be honored first of all. A young beauty, wooed in Dan’s headlong way, can hardly regard herself as anything but a privileged creditor, with a lien upon her lover’s entire being. And how should Anna suspect that Dan put into his work a large part of the ardor, the dreams, and the hopes that Love should properly monopolize?

IV.

DAN'S whole life had been concerned with practical things. He had always been making money, or trying to make it, since he was fifteen years old. But though he wanted to be rich, he loved action for its own sake; and action in his circumstances meant business. But to him it could never mean simply trading, nor farming, nor manufacturing on a small scale; in fact, none of the things that lay within his immediate reach in his native place. It must have the elements of originality and risk, must put to use the strongest things in him—imagination and daring, an emotional delight in letting himself go. The faculty which he had of seeing in a way over the heads of the people about him, of seeing things in a brighter, sharper light—somewhat as through a prism all objects are outlined in a glow of color—came to him directly from an emotional mother, and perhaps indirectly from that far-away Irish ancestor, along with the streak of fire in the blood and the sanguine temper.

And there were things in Dan's boyhood to stir the blood and breed dreams.

His father, to begin with, seemed a prosaic man enough, though in the end he came to wear an aureole for Dan. He was an engine-driver by trade, and came from Vermont on the wave of Eastern emigration that settled Illinois. But unknowingly

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to meet him there, came from the Western Reserve the daughter of a frontiersman, then a tall, strapping girl of nineteen, hardened by the life which had killed off the feebler ones of her family. Somehow she had felt enough of the spirit of that rude, simple life, of the impulse of the pioneer, pushing with axe and gun into the wilderness, to be able to hand it down to her son. Homesickness helped her to paint those vivid pictures. She longed for the forests; the flat prairie wearied her; and the half-grown trees which the New Englanders had planted on it only emphasized that flatness. Dan came to know exactly how the forests and log-houses looked; he had absorbed every detail of that four-weeks journey, from Ohio to the Illinois line, which Abraham Cleghorn, with his wife and seven surviving children and all his worldly goods, had made in two covered wagons drawn by four oxen each and followed by a couple of cows. The family ate and slept in these wagons. In each was a small charcoal furnace, which served for heating and cooking. So vivid were all these things to Dan that he thought he had made that journey himself. He was nearly seven before he ceased to relate how he had gone out with his grandfather, with a hatchet and bucket, to cut from the charred trees along the route the charcoal for those wagon-stoves. But Dan was the sixth child of John Devin and Martha Cleghorn, after they had settled on a small farm near the village of Mapleton and, according to the tradition of their time, begun to multiply.

Most important to his outlook on life, he was of the generation of the Civil War; old enough when it be-

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gan to remember his father's departure with the first volunteer regiment from their county. Dan thought he recollected even the previous drilling and enlisting of men in Mapleton; and undoubtedly about this time the line between fact and vivid fancy began to be drawn. Thus at a bound the boy's horizon, which else would have included only Mapleton, and a vague notion of the West, widened indefinitely. Whenever a neighbor came to their house, or whenever the mother talked to her children, Dan heard of fearfully interesting things, too big for him to grasp. Names became familiar to him that he never forgot, though he only understood them later: battle and siege—Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, the Battle of Lookout Mountain, the Battle of the Wilderness, the March to the Sea. Dan dreamed night and day of men fighting their way up the mountains, through the forest wilderness, all the infinite way to the ocean. Interwoven with his childhood thoughts was this feeling of the vastness of the country; his imagination took fire from it. Dan now could never be bounded by village life. But Mapleton, during the years of the war and immediately afterward, was not a village; it was part of one vast community. Practically every household in or near it was bound by its most sensitive nerve; the fate of one was concerned with the fortune of all; and all must thrill with the news of battle, east or west, victory or defeat—life or death.

Among Dan's war-time pictures were these:

The arrival at their house of the local paper, the *Mapleton Weekly Courier*, with its enormous lists of killed and wounded after each great battle; his mother first in fearful silence running these columns

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through, and then reading aloud to the awed, uneasy children, with shaking voice, the story of the fight.

The first sight of a wounded soldier, a one-armed man.

Their giving up the farm and moving into a still smaller house in Mapleton. John Devin had mortgaged his little property when he enlisted, in order to leave his family money enough to live on in his absence; taking the chance that the war would last, as the country generally thought, but "ninety days."

The rare letters from his father, one of which told that he had been wounded and had spent three weeks in hospital.

The illumination of Mapleton in honor of the twin victories of Vicksburg and Gettysburg; and the talk about Grant, whom Dan pictured to himself as a brilliant hero mounted on a fire-breathing steed like that in an engraving of Napoleon which hung in their parlor.

The sight of his mother, sewing, sewing, sewing, from morning till night, in the little parlor littered with piles of cloth—for she made their living now as a tailoress. The two girls and three boys who were older than Dan did the housework and odd jobs out of school hours.

The news that his father had been wounded again at Savannah . . . the long expectation of him . . . his return. A stranger, a white, old-looking man, with crutches and only one leg . . . with a beard . . . in an old blue uniform. The neighbors all came to see him, and he seemed too tired to talk. Dan's mother never cried before his

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father, but often did when only the children were about. She sewed as much as ever.

His father's beginning to talk to him about the war. Dan would listen, fascinated, only asking questions when the narrative flagged. Now came those sounding names again, and now first Dan understood what a battle was, how Vicksburg was taken, how they fought the Wilderness through, and how Sherman marched through Georgia. Now, too, his father became a hero to him by reason of those experiences.

The end of the War. Grant had licked the rebels out. "Thank God," said Dan's mother sternly, "and now I hope they will be punished for it. I hope they will hang that man Davis, and Toombs, and the rest of the traitors!" "There has been blood enough," Dan's father said dreamily. "We want peace."

Then a black day—a kind of earthquake. Dan is playing in the front yard—it is warm, everything is thawing out, the ground soft and squashy underfoot—the rich man who lives next door, Mr. Elwood, a solemn deacon on ordinary days, comes running down the street. He sees Dan's mother sewing at the parlor window and calls out to her, "*Haven't you heard? Lincoln is shot!*" Dan's mother throws up the window and leans out. She looks frightened. "*What did you say?*" "*Lincoln has been assassinated! Seward was shot, too, and Johnston, and I don't know how many more. The rebels have a plot to seize Washington!*" Dan's mother rushes out into the street. There comes his father on his crutches . . . there come all the neighbors. The street is full of people. "*Lincoln is dead. What will happen now? Perhaps we shall have to fight the war over again.*"

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There is no supper that night at home. "Don't bother me!" says Dan's mother fiercely, sitting in the parlor in the dark. The children help themselves to preserves and gingerbread in the kitchen. They are hungry, even if the War has got to be fought over again. Dan thinks that Grant and old Sherman can lick the Johnny Rebs again, anyhow, and perhaps *he* will have a chance to go this time. Next day it is like a funeral. Nearly every house and all the stores have black cloth hangings. People cry in the streets.

The night that Dan is taken into Chicago to see the dead President lying in state. The train is crowded when they get on, but a seat is given to his father and mother. Dan and his older brothers and sisters stand in the jammed aisle. It is the first time Dan has seen the city. He is taken through miles of streets, all lighted up and all crowded with people. The crowd is noisy; some are crying; some are swearing, but Dan's father goes ahead on his crutches, and the people push back and let him pass. After him goes Dan's mother, dragging Dan by the hand, and calling to the others to keep close behind. At last they get into the building. Dan had never imagined that a building could be a mile wide and high. He wonders how they got the black hanging away up there. Not a sound except the shuffling of thousands of people walking along in line. Dan's mother still holds him by the hand. Here it is . . . a great pedestal, all black—a great black coffin . . . soldiers standing all about . . . Dan looks into the coffin . . . his heart is pounding hard. His mother suddenly squeezes his hand so

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that it hurts. He feels her trembling and sobbing. Dan bursts into tears as they are swept on in the crowd. His first sight of death, that face is printed on his memory as by a flash of light. He sees it often afterward in his sleep.

.

John Devin got occupation running a stationary engine in Mapleton; but he was not able to keep it long. The wound which he had received at the beginning of the war, and which had never entirely healed, soon disabled him completely. He lived to see Grant elected President and died before he was inaugurated. In Daniel's memory his father remained as a kind of embodiment of the spirit of the war; doubtless mainly because of the way the widow talked of him. Martha Devin impressed deeply on her children's minds the fact that their father had given his all—his little property and his life—for his country. Patriotism was to her what it had been to him, a religious emotion. Her voice would break when she spoke of the Flag, as it did when she talked of the silent patience with which John Devin had suffered.

Dan went to work when he was fifteen years old, after he had gone through the grammar-school and two years of the high-school. He was taken on as office-boy and expected to make himself generally useful in the establishment of the Mapleton *Weekly Courier*. The *Courier* was a Republican newspaper. Dan's father had been a Republican. But in any case Dan would naturally have been of the party which stood for growth, expansion, a positive and

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active policy. At any rate, even while he was learning, among other things, to set type and gather items of local news, his practical faith was fixed, and he never afterward departed from it. Wherever fortune led him later, he was part of the Republican machine. He thought his party right on almost every issue, and almost every act of it justified on one plea or another; but right or wrong, it was his party, and loyalty to it was an article of his extremely simple creed.

His mother grieved so bitterly at the necessity for his leaving school—she had dreamed of a complete education and a professional career for the flower of her family—that Dan promised her he would study in the evenings, keep up with his classes and take the examinations, and he did so. When he was seventeen he finished the high-school course, and his first article was published in the paper—an account of the fire which destroyed Mr. Elwood's house and barn one bitter night when the water all but froze in the hose. For a time Dan considered himself dedicated to a literary career. But having an earlier chance in the business department of the newspaper, he began to drum up advertising and job printing, and to dun delinquent subscribers, and this field quickly widened.

Dan was strong physically and full of restless energy, which found an outlet mainly in work. He shared, however, in the town gayeties—such as they were—the beginning of the roller-skating craze, an occasional "social" with dancing in the rink, a debating society, hay-rides and buggy rides by moonlight, or a game of cards very much on the quiet. There was plenty of more or less innocent flirtation going on in Mapleton. Dan had his share of that; but did

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not often fall in love with any violence, and saved himself by the ease with which he fell out again.

At the age of twenty-one he suddenly found himself business manager and part owner of the *Courier*, but this advancement was not due entirely to his own exertions. He had made a powerful friend in the person of Alvin Colfax, the big man of Mapleton, and the most brilliant lawyer of his time at the Illinois bar. Judge Colfax, as he was generally called, had political ambitions; he had also a strong belief in the future of Mapleton. It was through his efforts that the railroad was brought there; and he further showed his faith by building a house that is still the show-place of the town—an imposing edifice of red brick and white stone, with broad lawns about it, an elaborate iron fence to shut it off from the street, and at the rear a large coach-house and stables, surmounted by a cupola and a gilt horse.

It was the Judge's idea that Mapleton would grow up to this house; and he predicted freely that the days of Rockford, the county seat, were numbered. Naturally, the Mapleton *Courier* would increase in importance in direct ratio; and even now it was worth while as an organ for an aspiring Congressman. The Judge forthwith acquired a controlling interest in the paper, and then began his friendship for Dan. He liked the young fellow from the start—his good looks, his temperament, his energy and ambition. And the sincere admiration which Dan gave to the Judge gratified a deep need in the elder man. Judge Colfax required followers, disciples, personal homage; and he preferred young men, because with these such a relation involved no kind of servility. The Judge

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wanted to be the leader in his society, but he did not like associating with his inferiors. Furthermore the quality of youth was a delight to him—he loved what was expanding, growing, alive. Dan pleased him in their first interview, and was immediately asked to dinner. The Judge dined at six o' clock, whereas the accustomed hour of Mapleton was twelve noon; and there were many stories afloat in the town of the Lucullian luxury of these feasts.

Judge Colfax did like good living and he was served well. Moreover, he was a rich man, as the times went; worth, it was reputed, between thirty and forty thousand dollars, besides the income from his practice. He was a bachelor; and Dan was overcome to find how elaborate a meal could be thought necessary for two men. He had his first taste of wine at the Judge's table that night; and went away at ten o'clock, intoxicated, not by the Burgundy, of which he had been sparing, but by his host's talk, and the whole atmosphere of ease, power, and command that surrounded him. Dan walked far out into the country, in a kind of trance of enjoyment and desire that was half pain. He had no doubt that he, too, should be successful—that he should be in time some such man as Judge Colfax was—but what an interval lay between!

In the months that followed Dan spent an increasing amount of time with the Judge. He was invited to dinner very frequently. Judge Colfax taught him to play billiards, gave him the run of his library, and would discourse to him by the hour of his experiences and observations of men and things, of politics and the state of the country, of love, war, and fortune.

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Very often in these soliloquies the Judge would be drunk, but he was eloquent in his cups. His vanity came out more plainly then; and a certain grandiose, rather flamboyant, quality about him was more marked. He was apt, moreover, to be exceedingly profane; but there was nothing worse in him, though Mapleton privately held that Dan was going to the dogs because of the Judge's taking him up. Mapleton was proud of its great man, but at the same time loved to spread scandal about him. Dan was called a beggar on horseback and was abused for being "more close-mouthed than ever." But his apparent reserve was more than anything else the solitude of soul that is the penalty of the seer of visions—whether visionary or not. To Judge Colfax, who understood, Dan poured out his whole mind and heart. He continued to be careful of the unwonted wine, but it had its effect on him, no doubt. The truth of him came out also in those long evenings, spent in the Judge's library or billiard-room. And the truth of Dan at that time was leaping ambition which was not sure of its goal; many fine dreams, bright but blurred and vague; a great amount of emotion, easily stirred by sounding words; and a generous sweetness of nature, with the best intentions in the world. If Dan did you harm, it would most likely be from over-confidence in his own ability, plans, or the promises of somebody else. He had a natural belief in the best that could happen; a disinclination to look on the darker side of anybody or anything.

For Judge Colfax he had an entire loyalty which saw no blemish in its idol, and which longed heartily

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for an opportunity to do him service. When he was taken into the Judge's confidence, and shown how he could really help the Judge's ambition, Dan fairly trod on air. He was not absolutely disinterested; naturally it was part of Judge Colfax's power over him, that he saw his own advancement in the Judge's friendship. Nor was he mistaken in this confidence. On his twenty-first birthday the Judge gave him an interest in the *Courier* and told him that he meant to watch over his career and to leave him half his property; in the meantime, if he needed money he was to consider that he might draw in advance.

"I sha'n't marry, Dan," the Judge said. "I'm an old fellow now"—he was forty-two—"at least for that kind of thing. I'm well past the age when adventure tempts for its own sake; I see the shoals and reefs where you see the sirens, as Thackeray says. The fact is, I was born a generation too soon. I can't help being conservative—it's in the blood of my confounded New England ancestors, who never in their lives lived up to their incomes or forgot their lawful wives. They left me a conscience, Dan, which warned me off from matrimony; it gave me such a high idea of the duties and responsibilities of the married state that I avoided it as the plague. In my younger days when I found I was getting interested in a girl I used to pack up and leave town at once. I always found a few weeks' absence a specific. Then when I came back some other fellow would be courting the girl, for of course it was only the pretty ones that attracted me. You might think I would be jealous—bless you, no. My only thought was, 'Thank

heaven she is provided for.' If one of the jades had had the art to pretend I had jilted her, or to wear the willow for even a month, I can't answer for the consequences. I dare say my infernal conscience might have driven me to marry her in spite of all. But, praised be feminine stupidity, they all tried the same game—flaunting the new beau in my face. And, as I said, it worked to a charm.

"But don't think I admire that kind of caution. That perpetual afterthought is like a string tied to a man's leg. It gives him a ridiculous gait, until he learns to resign himself to the inevitable. No, I hate caninness. But it's forced upon me by those old Puritan Colfaxes who thought so much of their damned descent that it's a righteous judgment on them to have the family come to an end through their godliness.

"I envy you, Dan. You're foot-loose. You've got the country before you where to choose—I don't say the world, for this country is world enough for me or any man. By George, how it broadens out! I and my generation are the end of the old order of things; you're the beginning of the new. I'm doomed, I think, to die in this place. I don't look farther afield than Washington. The rest of my life will be spent in the kind of thing that I'm already more or less familiar with. Public life and politics offer no real novelty to me. And I wish it to be so. I've no spirit for untried fields, any more than I have the will to transport my unwieldy corporeal frame to the Californian placers.

"But you young men—you'll inherit the earth! We shall grow fast now, Dan. People are beginning

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to see what the war has done for us, now that they've done counting their dead, and stopped worrying about the niggers. Look to the West! Do you know, I think that's the place for you. I've been studying over you a good deal, my son. I don't think Mapleton's going to hold you."

Dan broke in here, though usually when the Judge took this contemplative attitude and tone, stretched out in his big easy-chair before the library fire, with his cigar between his teeth and the whiskey and water at his elbow, the young man was content to hold his peace and listen.

"It will hold me as long as you're here, sir," he said with a little quaver in his voice.

"I used to think so, Dan," the Judge turned an affectionate look upon him. "But I've changed my mind about Mapleton in the last year. I think now that she's out of the current—it sweeps round her, Dan, and you and I together can't change its course. I begin to think that Mapleton will be left high and dry, or at least stuck in the mud—which is a more appropriate figure. You've done a lot with the *Courier*, and I know you're looking forward to doing a lot more, but I think you'll be wasted here. You can't make a big newspaper in a one-horse town, and that's what Mapleton is and I believe is going to be. And the reason? Look at the young men. Are they staying here and helping to build the place up? Not much. They're going to Chicago, or they're going West. The leaven is working. They see big things ahead of them. They're right. Mapleton is just half-way to nowhere. She has all the conservatism of the East and none of its hustle. In a

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few years she'll be simply an adjunct to the cemeteries. You'd have seen this too, Dan, if it hadn't been for me. Perhaps you have seen it."

Dan nodded. "Something like it. I've thought some about the West, too, of course, seeing so many of the fellows go; but I thought the paper needn't depend entirely on Mapleton. And somehow the place seems pretty big to me while you're here. And when you are in Congress you may still want the *Courier*——"

"That's all right, Dan, but you're not to be simply a help to my career, if I have any. And I don't believe that your field is politics. You don't pull well with other men—you can't adapt your stroke to theirs. I've noticed that in the business. That's one reason why I wanted to make you independent as long as you stay with the *Courier*. After the election you'll sell your interest—I'll buy it if nobody else will—and that will give you a little money to start in with out there."

The quick tears sprang to Dan's eyes—he was thus easily moved by kindness from those he loved—and he was speechless for the moment. Judge Colfax was looking into the fire, his large gray eyes, under their bushy brows, fixed and meditative. Apparently that moment he ceased to be aware of Dan.

"A new world to conquer—a new wilderness," he murmured. "Not with the pick and spade and axe—Kentucky has seen the last of that—but by sheer brains. A new kind of pioneer, with the civilization of the East back of him, with the railroad to follow him. The best of us, our youth, will organize the new country. Bring the Chinese to lay the ties and

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work in the fields; ship the European peasants west to dig in the mines; and we will gather up the gold in both hands, and heap it up millions on millions, and build up with it the Empire of the world.

"Now is the golden time. The big chances lie there, as the gold nuggets did, for the first comer to pick up. The next had to wash their gold out of the streams grain by grain. Now you must dig for it, pulverize the rock. So it is with the big fortunes. To be first on the ground—that is the thing. To be the scout, the picket out in advance—before the main army comes down with its tread of ten thousand——"

The Judge sighed and cut short his musings, turning to fill his glass.

"Take some whiskey, Dan, and let's drink to your good fortune."

.

On the eve of the election Judge Colfax suffered a stroke of apoplexy, and after lingering unconscious for three days, he died. No will could be found. A left-handed wife and family appeared from Chicago and a brother from Boston to claim his property, and eventually divided it between them, the brother taking as part of his share the *Courier* stock. The big brick house was shut up, no one rich enough to rent or buy it choosing to live in Mapleton. Dan sold his interest to Joshua Colfax—a dry man with a hard gray eye—for a good deal less than it was worth. But he was in no mood to drive a bargain, and wanted simply to get away from Mapleton. A few months before he had had the offer from Frank

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Emmons to go into orange-ranching in California. Emmons warned him that the country was by no means all that it had been painted; still there were opportunities, and above all it had a climate that a man could live in. Dan had replied saying that he could not leave Mapleton for six months, and very likely should stay there indefinitely. When the Judge died he telegraphed Emmons, and finding the offer still open, telegraphed again, accepting it. He had about eighteen hundred dollars to take with him. It was a plunge—but Dan was then in the mood for plunging. It was his first plunge, but—temperament and chance playing in with one another—by no means his last.

In his grief he thought, it must be confessed, very little about his family; as, for that matter, he had done for some time. He had continued to live at home; and his mother and the two younger children and Elmira, the older girl, who had not married, had had the benefit of his good fortune. But they had not shared his life. His mother, who grew sharper and more rigid with age, once angered him deeply by repeating an unpleasant story about the Judge, of whom, on hearsay, and with a bias of maternal jealousy, she disapproved. From that time he ceased to talk about the Judge at home, and spent less and less time there. And now there was no tie that he dreaded to break.

He thought that the only memories of Mapleton he should carry away were of his father and of Judge Colfax. He never saw the town again. But it had impressed itself upon him more deeply than he thought. All his life some detail of it would keep

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rising up—the war-time happenings, the looks of some village sweetheart, a hunt for snipe in the marshes, the deep thick black mud of the roads, the gas-lit streets with their wooden sidewalks and overhanging maples, and loafers on the corners; Mr. Elwood's pond, where he skated as a small boy; maple-sugar time in the spring, when the trees in their front yard would be pierced, and the sweet sap collected in tin pails, to be boiled down afterward in a huge black kettle; the cemetery where his father was buried, and where they laid the Judge, with a great gray granite sarcophagus over him to keep him down; the very air and smell of the prairie, with its perpetual low hanging vapors—its freezing cold, its moist, sticky heat; the long line of wild geese stretching across the gray sky, and their harsh, melancholy cries as they fled away south.

V.

TEN days after the sale had put twenty thousand dollars to Dan's credit in the bank, and given him notes for forty thousand more, he married Anna. The wedding was as quiet as possible. Anna's father performed the ceremony in the little parlor of her home. The only witnesses were Mrs. Quartermain, who wept throughout, and Herwin, a young fellow inheriting his mother's plainness along with enough temperament to send him far on the road to physical ruin. Herwin's Prince Albert coat and white tie, together with the brilliance of the noonday sun that filled the room, emphasized his sallowness. Mrs. Quartermain, in her worn black silk, with reddened nose and eyes, came no better off; and the minister looked wan and shadowy in the flood of light. But the bridal pair shone all the brighter by contrast.

Anna wore her new blue travelling dress and a hat with a sweeping blue feather. She wore also the bridegroom's present, a watch and chain, the watch-case set with diamonds in the form of a star; and carried his bouquet, a huge affair of roses and white violets. She looked radiantly happy. It was Dan who was grave, whose voice trembled at the solemnity of his promises; he looked straight into Anna's eyes when he said, "And thereto I plight thee my

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troth," whereas Anna, when she repeated the words, looked at the floor.

It was astonishingly brief, both felt; nor was there much time to be emotional afterward. The carriage was at the door; Anna hurried the leave-taking, and the new-married pair were off, with a shower of rice from Herwin's nervous hand spending itself against the panels.

They were bound to San Francisco for a two weeks' honeymoon; then they were to come back to the house Dan had rented and furnished in accordance with Anna's wish. Later they would build to suit themselves. The house was a large new one, of wood, on one of the principal streets. The two servants were already installed, and Mrs. Quartermain was to stay there until their return. Dan had been lavish in his buying; everything was in the latest fashion and expensive. There were a few handsome presents, too, silver or bric-à-brac, from his business friends or associates; and some others which mainly expressed good-will. From Dan's mother came, but not in time for his wedding-day, a letter to the bride and a lace handkerchief. Mr. Stoneman sent a gilt spoon with a green stone set in the handle. Mary Emmons sent half a dozen teaspoons, a cherished heirloom, which Dan recollected well. From the bride's parents came another family treasure—a silver loving-cup, which had come overseas with the Cornwall Quartermaines in the last century. Herwin sent two dozen new silver forks from one of the jewelers in town; which, Anna reflected, her mother would have to pay for, if, indeed, they ever were paid for at all.

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But now at last she could put all the discomforts and annoyances of poverty behind her. For a fortnight she felt like a princess. Their rooms at the Palace Hotel, the carriage and horses hired for their stay, the best seats at the theatres, the elaborate meals, the rushing to and fro and profound salaams of the liberally feed servants, and last, but not least, the shopping, made up a delicious whirl of luxury and excitement which she would have liked to last forever. She enjoyed every moment of these expeditions, even the long drives about the windy city, out to the Cliff House and into the environs, which were Dan's suggestion; while, for his part, Dan enjoyed the shopping as much as anything. He bought for Anna a crescent and a marquise ring of diamonds; and she ordered a complete winter outfit of dresses, hats, and furs from an expensive house.

Dan knew a few people in San Francisco—newspaper men and politicians—but it did not occur to him to look them up for any social purpose. His happiness was restless, absorbed in itself—it was half pain. Yet it was happiness, for he felt that his life with Anna must work out into simplicity and peace. She would come to understand him and to love him, though not perhaps as he loved her; and meantime he must have patience. She trusted him and was fond of him already. In their little excursions she was delightfully gay; in all their lighter moments together completely at her ease, evidently happy. It was true that she much preferred gayety to emotion, but that was natural enough. Natural, too, that she should be a little frightened, even repelled, by the completeness and intensity with which Dan's

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love possessed him. He wanted to abandon himself, to be simple as a child with her; and that instinctive appeal to maternal tenderness failed. Anna herself wanted a firm support. She could not adjust herself yet to perceive, much less to satisfy, claims upon her own strength.

By the end of the fortnight, however, she had perfectly adjusted herself to the forms of her new life. The novelty of being rich had worn off, though not the naïve enjoyment. She still thought more of what she had than of what she would like to have; and, for that matter, it was her disposition to live in the present whenever the present was at all tolerable; just as it was Dan's to live in the future. Anna still got a keen thrill of pleasure out of every dress, hat, and trinket as she put it on; out of every admiring glance cast at her, and these were many. Her taste was, like Dan's, for striking and sumptuous effects. Her dresses were all of heavy cloth, silk or velvet, in rich colors, some of them trimmed with fur, all in elaborate designs. All her hats were large, with drooping feathers or velvet flowers. Her tall figure thus richly dressed, her young face blooming like a rose, her blond hair and dark eyes, could not but attract attention. And Anna had not yet got to the point of taking those delightful new possessions as a matter of course. She expected always to have them; but remembrance of the time when she had nothing except her beauty made her keenly conscious of clothes and setting.

The day before they were to leave for Los Angeles came the first real break in her pleasures. Dan, in the morning, left Anna at her dressmaker's, saying

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that he had some business to see to, but would be back to lunch. In the afternoon they were going for a farewell drive. Anna waited at the hotel from one till two, then came a delayed telephone message from Dan. Business detained him; he would lunch where he was and might not be back much before dinner. She must go on and take her drive without him.

She ate her luncheon without much taste for it, though the long wait after the morning's tussle with the wind had made her feel rather faint. After luncheon there was really nothing to do. She decided promptly that she wouldn't drive. The day was unpleasant, threatening rain, and she knew by heart, she thought, all the streets through which they usually drove—the main residence streets, where stood the stone palaces whose like Anna expected to possess some day. She began a yellow-backed novel, but found it dull; wrote two letters, to her mother and to Elise Andrews, her one girl chum, filled with glowing accounts of herself; tried on her newest dresses with all her diamonds; and finally relapsed on the bed in a dressing-gown, where Dan found her crying when he came in at six o'clock.

He was first terrified, then mystified; and had his primer lesson in consoling an injury which he could not for his life understand. Dan had almost never been bored; certainly never without some definite cause that action would remove. Nerves he had himself, and he was rapidly accustoming them to need and demand excitement; but he could not comprehend feminine nerves in the same condition. If he had ever heard the old word "vapors" applied to

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such a state of things it would have seemed to him very suitable. He was befogged himself; the grievances that Anna alleged did not strike him as tangible. Why should she be offended with him? He had sent the telephone message before one o'clock. Certainly he would blow up the hotel people, but——. But he couldn't get away. He had to see these men and arrange some important political matters with them, and he had been busy all day. She ought to have gone out. If she didn't want to drive she should have done something else. What? Well, anything. Anything except cry like a baby and spoil her looks.

At this point Dan had to change his tactics. A fresh burst of hysterical tears warned him not to reason further. He won her back to calmness, finally, by abasing himself as a careless brute, who was entirely at fault, and humbly begged her pardon. They were reconciled, dined in their own sitting-room, and Dan demonstratively declared that the marks of tears only made Anna more attractive. It was true, for him; he welcomed any sign of emotion in her far more deeply than he could be disturbed by it. He had not reasoned it out; but he knew that unless she were deeply moved she would not love him, and if she did not love him their life together would be neither peaceful nor happy. It was not only patience that he needed. He could see now that there were storms ahead.

However, they travelled back in very friendly fashion to their new home. Anna was delighted with its prettiness and comfort; delighted for once to see her family and to distribute her gifts. She had brought a pattern of heavy black silk for her mother,

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and a dressing-gown with Chinese embroidery for her father; and a silver vinaigrette for Elise. To these three, also, she exhibited all her new treasures. Dan had bought a grand piano for her; and when, the evening of their return, after they had dined alone, Dan sat in a corner of the dusky drawing-room smoking, while Anna sang his favorite songs—"Auld Lang Syne," "The Suwanee River" and "Annie Laurie"—both felt the homely sweetness of it all. Dan was moved beyond placid contentment; forsook his cigar, got up and put his arms about Anna, saying, with the thrill in his voice that she almost dreaded, "You're a thousand times too good for me, dearest. I don't deserve you."

"You're a silly boy," she tried to laugh it off. "I'm not good at all, you'll find out."

"All women are good," said the infatuated man. "They're good by nature, and men are naturally bad. No man deserves a really good woman like you, dearest. When I think of you, living peacefully in your home, sweet and innocent as you are, and being good and kind to me, you seem to me like—an angel."

She felt his cheek against hers wet with tears.

"Oh, please don't," she cried. "I don't like you to say such things. I'm not an angel, and I don't want to be, not a bit. I'd like to be rather wicked."

This confession came out headlong, in the kind of panic that possessed her whenever Dan on his part made an approach to confession. She knew that there were things in Dan's life that he regretted—knew vaguely that "men did" those things—but she did not want to know more definitely what Dan had done. Impulse urged Dan to pour it all out to her,

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and be absolved; but he had never done it, his instinct as well as hers preventing. He felt that most likely he should not get absolution from her. Anna had a kind of hatred of the whole subject. She was afraid to know how much Dan had—as she thought of it—degraded himself. And an obscure jealousy, more powerful in her than any other instinct, would shake her at times with physical repugnance. Dan, feeling this reluctance in her to let him talk freely, revered it as true womanly innocence, and would retire abashed—but with an ache at his heart. His ideal woman had this snowy purity, which would not defile itself by even the knowledge of evil; and he held that she need not and ought not to know man's life in its completeness. And yet the feeling that there were things he dared not tell Anna chilled him; it seemed to make a distance, almost a barrier, between them. If only she could have seen him at his worst, and forgiven, and loved!

But Anna's diversion was successful.

"You wicked!" he said fondly. "You couldn't be if you tried—you haven't the faintest idea of it. Tell me, how would you begin?"

"Oh——" Anna was at a loss for a moment. She did not want to shock him. "I mean to be frivolous, gay, don't you know? To go out a lot, dance, play cards, entertain, and have punch on the sideboard, and champagne, and—well, that's all, I guess."

Dan laughed.

"Well, I guess we can manage that! And without being very wicked, either."

"I hope we shall know a good many people. Your friends will come to see us soon, won't they?"

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"Oh, yes, they will—as soon as we want them. But I don't know so very many. Mostly men, in a business way."

"But"—here Anna touched that further desire of hers which she thought might displease her husband—"some of the men are nice, aren't they? Why shouldn't they come?"

"They will, I dare say, if we ask 'em. But why talk about them to-night?"

"Oh, no reason. I don't suppose anybody will come to-night."

"Well, I should hope not," Dan protested.

Anna rose from the piano-stool and, her hand clasped in his, drew him after her to the window. Without was a dense white fog. Even the lights of the cable-cars, passing in the street, thirty feet away, were invisible, though the clanging of their gongs could be heard.

"I hope Mrs. Goodwin will call on me," said Anna, dreamily. "And I suppose she will, since she sent a present, don't you?"

Mrs. Goodwin was the wife of a banker, and one of the patronesses of everything that happened in paragraphed society, from a ball to a church fair.

"I suppose so. Are you tired of me already?"

"You absurd man! You're not going to spend all your time with me, are you?"

"No—— I'm afraid not."

"Well, then, I must have some amusement."

"You shall have all you want—if you'll stay alone with me part of the time—and always like me better than anybody."

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"Oh—of course. But you want other people to admire me, too, don't you?"

A pause. "I suppose so—but not too much," said Dan, with a proprietary kiss.

"Too much? How could they admire me too much?" She spread out her arms and waltzed across the floor, into the back parlor. "Come here a minute—I'll show you something."

She turned up the gas, opened her little mahogany desk, and held out a handful of papers to him. Dan looked them over bewilderingly.

"Can't make 'em out," he said.

"Why, those are menus for dinners, can't you see? And this is a list of all the people we know that I'd like to invite. And this is a plan for a musicale and supper. And these are things I want to subscribe to—the Friday cotillions——"

"But I can't dance."

"You needn't. You look awfully handsome in full dress, and you can be a wall-flower. And I'm going to join all the clubs I can——"

Dan whistled. "Well, you *do* want to cut a swath!"

"I want some fun. Oh, Dan, I do want it awfully!"

Dan caught her in his arms.

"Then you shall have it—as long as the bank holds out."

"But we're going to be rich, aren't we—*really* rich?"

"I hope so. Some day."

"Oh, soon!"

.
"Soon" was the thought of most of the population of the city at that time. To be rich, if not to-day, at

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least to-morrow, was the general expectation; and practically to-day was to-morrow, since credit was easy to get. The "to-morrow" of the old Californians who had founded the town was a distant and disagreeable day when work was to be done, removed from the enjoyable present by a long chain of idle hours. The to-morrow of the Americans who had built the city was a golden time when the reward of to-day's work was to be reaped. No wonder if they anticipated it a little; and drew a check on the future which—unless something happened—to-morrow would put funds in the bank to pay.

When the Pueblo de Los Angeles was built out of its native clay, land in California could be had by the league and for the asking. The Spanish-Californians were few in a country of vast natural wealth. Estates of from four to eighteen leagues—a league is about five thousand acres—were common. But when a man and his horses could live out of doors all the year around; when his cattle and sheep, feeding uncared for over an unlimited range, supplied the main article of his diet, and a few acres in beans and maize furnished the others; when he could portion his daughters from the public domain: one league was as good as twenty. The typical Californian never thought of cultivating the land, even though the Mission Fathers showed him what could be done with it, bringing the almond from France, the olive and orange from Spain. He lived, happy and careless, finding it easy to borrow money when he needed it, and to get anything he wanted to buy on credit. When he had money he did not put it out at interest, but buried it in the earth or hid it in some corner; when he bor-

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rowed he willingly paid two or three per cent a month interest, and renewed his notes as often as they fell due, or borrowed more. He was trusted, for it was said of his class that they would pay their debts if it ruined them; as it did. In the middle fifties these pastoral patriarchs owned the whole of California; twenty years later they had lost everything.

When the Easterners rushed in on the wave of the gold excitement of '49 things boomed for a time and the Californians got the first benefit. Cattle became valuable for meat and the Yankee need for beef made the owners suddenly rich. They hastened to spend in the only ways they knew. They trimmed their saddles and bridles with solid silver, and had spurs of silver or even of gold. Few of their adobe houses had wooden floors; but they covered the floors of earth with costly rugs, hung their old four-post beds with silk and lace curtains, and the women went about dragging as many yards of silk and satin as could be looped into a train.

The end of this splendor came soon. The simple Californians were finally ruined by the boom from the East. As soon as their land was perceived to be valuable they lost it. Miles of wild grass were cut up by the new-comers into stock and grain ranches, still thousands of acres in extent; and so held until the Eastern immigration changed in character. When enough men came, not to dig gold but to farm, they broke up the great estates by forcing the owners to pay their share of taxation; and each new wave of settlers subdivided still further. Small farmers at first had a hundred and sixty acres; later they were content with thirty or twenty. Then the Chinaman

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might have ten acres in strawberries or he might raise vegetables on an acre lot within the city limits. But it was reserved for the second boom to cut up an acre into twenty or thirty city lots and sell it for enough to buy out the twenty-acre farmer twice over.

Once more Eastern gold filled the pockets of the Californians, while native amateurs ably assisted the foreign professionals in working the boom to its height.

But long before this final transformation of the city it had dropped the superfluous syllables of its lazy Spanish name and had grown away from the original settlement, though this remained in lines of peeling, one-story adobes, under the name of "Sonora-town," a place of sordid look and evil resort. Beyond it grew up the American town, first the business district, then the well-laid-out and shaded residence streets on which business constantly encroached. A few better-class examples of the old architecture might linger in the lower part of the American city—two or three of those adobe houses which were simply a long row of rooms each with a door opening on the veranda, unless, in a family having unmarried daughters, there might be one room with no outside door and only a narrow window, to keep the girls safe from nocturnal wooers. There, too, stood the old Mission church with its cracked and discordant bells. And living relics of the old days sometimes perambulated the broad streets of the new quarter—the ice-cream man and the tamale man, swarthy of skin, dressed in white, carrying on their heads the buckets holding their mysterious wares and proclaiming them by the aid of a bell.

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The boom decreased the interest, never very brisk, in these reminders of the old life. The tourist might like to see General Frémont's head-quarters, or some of the huge palm-trees which grew up with the Spanish town; but after that he was more apt to be interested in the latest "addition" to the city—a tract of land out on the hills perhaps beyond the suburbs, but already laid out, lighted, and being sold off in lots.

After practically all the available land within the city limits had been thus disposed of, the speculators proceeded to buy out the small farmer next beyond, and to cut up his orange orchards and vineyards. Naturally the fruit trees and vines went by the board in this and succeeding deals. Nobody wanted them, and the sooner they died from lack of water the sooner they would cease to cumber the valuable ground.

Then the boomer went still farther afield. Between the city and the mountains stretched miles of level or gently rolling land, a good deal of it cultivated, the rest covered with the native growth of brush and live-oaks. The mind of the real-estate man saw the wave of urban population submerging this rural waste, and sweeping clear up over the foothills; or at least he saw the land dotted with white stakes representing the population to come. Accordingly, he bought a certain number of acres and founded a "town-site." First he selected a name for his town; then streets were laid out and graded and sometimes car-tracks were put down. Electric-light poles were set up. Sometimes a hotel was built, or if not the lumber for it was carted to the ground,

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along with loads of water-pipe. Then a map of the property was made and all was ready for the sale.

The boom had lasted a year and a half, and Dan had been married three months, when he threw down his big stake on the broad green table. But he had been in the line of it from the start. He had seen the craze grow from its small beginning to such proportions as turned many cooler brains than his. And he had helped it on by every means in his power, having a real faith that the country would live up to its press-notices.

He had been assistant business manager of the *Clarion*—having invested in the newspaper after dissolving partnership with Emmons—during the memorable winter two years before, when the influx of Eastern tourists doubled past records, and when the immemorial desire of the Californian to sell his land had begun to be gratified on a large scale. Dan then had no land to sell; but when the trading in city-lots assumed the proportions of a boom, he did a part of it. However, he was not a trader by temperament. He wanted to make money, but the idea of buying cheap and selling dear and keeping on the safe side, did not attract him. It may fairly be said that he was never much interested in any transaction that did not involve an element of risk; and, indeed, that the larger this element was, the deeper was his interest. He was a plunger; but so far as plunging can be distinguished from gambling, not a gambler. He had, for example, never cared for cards or racing. He speculated; but not simply for the gain, nor for the excitement. The desire of action and of achievement was his impulse. To do something at once bold

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and solid was his intention. To discover, to organize and direct forces in line with the development of the country, was really his ambition now, and the boom had helped to make that ambition definite. Dan believed in the boom. Already in his mind he had gone far beyond it; and what loomed large to the eyes of less imaginative men seemed to him but the natural consequence of the pouring of Eastern capital into a country of immense natural riches; and that inpouring, again, but the result to be expected, when the shrewd Easterners should see the country's possibilities.

Dan kept his interest in the *Clarion* because the newspaper is a necessary and valuable agent in building up the country, but he gave his time to real estate, and constantly reinvested his increasing profits. From the city he had progressed to the suburbs, where more land could be bought for less money; and thence beyond the city limits. The sale on the Emmons ranch gave him the money to invest in a town-site. The town-site had been in Dan's mind from the time when such a thing seemed possible. He had thought of it before he met Anna; it had kept a place in his thoughts not to be usurped even by her image. And now that the woman he loved was his, Dan had a double stake to throw; and he risked it on the future of his town.

VI.

DAN'S town was named Blaine, after the statesman whom he most ardently admired, and for whom he had stumped the State in the last but one Presidential campaign. The disappointment of the White Plumed Knight himself in the result of that campaign, though it may have lasted longer than Dan's, could hardly have been sharper at first. And Dan's loyalty was enduring if not his grief. It may be that the title deed to the best corner-lot in the new town did not convey much consolation to the Secretary of State; but such as it was, he had it.

The town-site was twenty miles out in the valley of the San Gabriel and comprised sixty acres of level land, which had never been broken by the plough. It was well into December before all Dan's arrangements were made. He put up no buildings; but he graded his streets, erected electric-light poles, and laid down sidewalks. Meantime towns had been located to the east and west of him, to the north and south. Baldwin, a boom town in the foot-hills, was really growing, and survives to-day; and others, founded to grow and not merely to sell, took root and prospered. The population of the parent city was still increasing, and the holidays, which always brought the main body of visitors, were yet to come.

Daniel Devin's hopes were green and flourishing, as the whole face of the country in its spring luxuri-

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ance. He enjoyed thoroughly the time that he spent on his land, superintending the work. He liked bossing any kind of a job, and particularly anything that took him out of doors. He felt while he walked about and gave orders to his Mexicans that he should have liked to be always as near the earth; a farmer, perhaps, if farming could be conducted by a central brain controlling enough hands. It was inspiring to sow, to watch the growth of the harvest, and to reap; and to sow a crop of white stakes and reap brick buildings was to Dan a legitimate as well as a most interesting enterprise. He already saw the brick buildings in his mind's eye; the growth of the town would make it a centre for the agricultural products of the valley, and would bring the railroad. It would be a health resort, too, for the dry air of the valley was sought by consumptives. And since many a town has been made by the natural beauty of its surroundings, Blaine had a third chance of life and prosperity.

It lay just below the hills that rolled waves of green up into the clefts and cañons of the mountain range. The short wild grass, sown with violets, that covered these slopes after the rains, gave the most brilliant note; but the whole valley—really a broad plain bounded on the south and west by another line of hills bare in the distance—was a patchwork of greens, wild or cultivated land alike, relieved by the deep brown of freshly ploughed fields, the glitter of a stream between rows of cotton-wood or willow trees, or a stretch of wild mustard tossing its light-gold blossom high in the air. The mountains near at hand lost their blue and purple tones, and showed brown and bronze instead above the line where the chapar-

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ral climbed. Still to the north rose a further range, crowned with snow and melting vaguely into the radiant blue of the sky.

Dan had bought his land from an old German, Jacob Rathgeber, of whose ranch it had formed a part. Rathgeber had declined to part with any of his cultivated land, and especially with the little rise crowned by his house and gardens. Dan coveted this site for his hotel, and offered a round price for it.

"Sell my rose-garden—tausendmal nein!" exclaimed the old settler scornfully. He formed the habit of coming down, whenever, from the vantage ground of his hill-top, he perceived Dan among the workmen; and would stand, pipe in mouth, watching the operations with a sardonic smile, and occasionally offering a chuckling comment. The creases of his old clothes were constantly full of the soil of his flower-beds and powdered with tobacco. He smelt of beer, seldom shaved, and never wore a collar. Now and then he would be morose, for, unable to resist the offer that Dan had made him, he still regretted having sold the land. One day he said, while his eyes roved with mingled pride and gloom over his trim, perfectly kept orchards, the fields of young barley just beginning to head, stirred by the light breeze in glistening waves, and his garden ablaze with color:

"If I t'ought you would ever have a town here I would yet try to buy my land back."

"Try," said Dan good-humoredly.

"Well, maybe I get it back wit'out buying. If your town don't grow in a hurry, you sell it out for what you can get, hein? You ain't goin' to wait some years for it to grow."

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"No, I don't expect to," Dan said abstractedly, and began to whistle.

"No. I been fifteen years making my rose-garden, and it is wort' all the town you will ever make here. My view is already spoiled with dese criss-cross lines and poles. If you should build any buildings here, I turn my house around to look down into the cañon."

"Well, you better get to work, then," was Dan's rejoinder. "We'll begin to build the hotel in two or three weeks."

"Ach, niemals. I don't believe it. I know how dese sales work, I been to one the other day, where they got another town like yours about a mile over. It makes me laugh. All you want is to sell out some lots to dose people in stove-pipe hats wit' diamonds in dere shirts. Much dey care about your town! You ain't goin' to live here yourself, nicht?"

"Maybe," Dan laughed. The old fellow amused him. "Maybe you and I'll be the first residents. We must be neighborly."

"I a resident! I move out first."

"Well, you'll probably move out sooner or later. This land will be too valuable for you to live on, when the valley settles up. When you can get five thousand dollars an acre for it, you won't put ten acres into alfalfa and three into flowers. I'll build my hotel on your hill yet."

"Not till I'm dead, anyhow," shouted Rathgeber as Dan moved away.

The mid-day sun was warm on the plain from which the western hills cut off the sea-breeze. Dan went a little way up the slope and threw himself down on the grass in the shade of a live-oak tree. The grass

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was coarse, but of the brightest and most luxuriant green; and in with it grew innumerable violet-plants and other wild-flowers which would be blossoming in a few weeks. It hid, too, the nests of the meadow-larks, which were singing far and near in the covert—a brief song of lowly sweetness, liquid as the gurgle of a stream, fresh and joyous as the spring itself.

“I suppose I’m trespassing,” Dan said lazily to Rathgeber, who had followed him. “Are you going to throw me off?”

The old German grunted.

“Do you know, I like this”—Dan waved his hand vaguely—“better than your fenced-in place. I think the violets and poppies when they come up just where they please will be a long sight prettier than your stiff roses and lilies.”

“Ah, you have not seen my rose-garden.” Rathgeber after a pause added shamefacedly, “If you will come up and drink a glass of beer with me?”

Dan took the invitation as a pretext, but accepted it cheerfully enough. They walked together up the winding roadway, bordered with rows of fan-palms and bands of small flowers, that led to the house. The knoll lay in the mouth of a cañon. Down its slope and up the hill beyond ran long lines of orange and lemon trees. The cottage was surrounded by perfectly kept lawns, studded with odd-shaped little flower-beds. A great rose-vine with a trunk as thick as a man’s arm overspread the whole front of the house and threw its white blossoms above the roof. An odd bright medley of flowers was banked against the sides of the house—nasturtiums, fuchsias, lilies, geraniums, and a dozen other sorts. On the porch

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as they approached stood a homely little woman in a stiff print dress and white apron, with a large dinner bell in her hand.

"Ah, dinner must be ready," said Rathgeber with an air of surprise. He glanced anxiously at his guest. "Would you sit down with us?"

His manœuvre succeeding, the old man became at once happily genial. He ushered Dan into the tiny parlor, full of German bric-à-brac and the smell of rose pot-pourri; hurried to change his dirty coat for a velvet house-jacket, and then invited the visitor to follow him out the back-door and into the grape-arbor, where the table was neatly set for dinner. There was a good solid meal, with unlimited Münchner of the best. As they ate, Rathgeber questioned Dan about the business situation in the city, and his personal connection with it. Much of the peasant roughness of his speech had disappeared, though he ate with his knife and talked with his mouth full.

"So you have made sixty thousand dollars in the last year, eh?" he said, sceptically. "Mostly on paper, ain't it? Well, maybe you get out dis time, I don't know. People are about crazy just now, but how long will it last? I t'ink you're crazy to pay me so much for my land. How much you t'ink I paid for it when I came here fifteen years ago?"

"Oh, about a dollar an acre."

"No, sir, two dollars and a half. Dis whole valley was a desert den—not'ing but sage-brush and cactus, sand and stones. Dere was no water and nobody ever t'ought to raise anyt'ing on it. Dere was a little stream up here in the cañon going to waste. I started in to keep bees. When I got enough money

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to pipe de water over dot hill, all de rest was easy. My oranges and olives, my grapes and all other fruits, pay me every year more dan de whole business cost. Now you come along, and pay me for land dot I never even ploughed, t'ree hundred dollars an acre. I'm rich, I don't need dot money, but if you offer it I take it. But if you don't make a lot on it you are busted, nicht?"

"Not a bit of it. Even if I didn't sell it right off, I'd have the land, wouldn't I?"

Rathgeber shook his head.

"You paid me eight t'ousand dollars. In t'ree months you got to pay me ten t'ousand more. If you don't sell dot land you can't do it. Now I ain't goin' to make you a present of dot ten t'ousand." He hurried on, drowning Dan's protest by a violent blow on the table.

"It ain't right, I tell you! You'll be sorry—and I'll be sorry—and de country'll be sorry. It's better you make one place like mine dan a hundred towns like yours."

"Even supposing I make eighteen thousand dollars for you and fifty thousand for myself,—and the town goes on growing and trebles the value of this land you've got left?" suggested Dan.

Another blow on the table.

"It ain't, I tell you! You can't take a piece of land, stick some white poles in it and say, 'yesterday you were wort' five hundred dollars, to-day you're wort' five t'ousand.' Niemals! Margaretha, bring the pipes."

When the little hausfrau had brought them and filled the long, gayly decorated bowls, Dan could not

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refuse to light his, though he said he must soon be getting away.

"I have business in the city this afternoon. But first I want to see your garden," he added out of courtesy.

Rathgeber sighed. "Already? You Americans always hurry. If we could smoke here awhile, it would be pleasanter, too, outside. Only one more stein of beer?"

"One more, then. But why should I hurry you away? Another day will do for the garden."

"No, to-day is always the best time. To-morrow maybe never comes, nicht wahr?"

The beer was brought stone-cold from the earthen cellar, and slowly consumed. Then Rathgeber filled his pipe again and reluctantly rose.

"Ach, es ist so furchtbar unangenehm die Tatel zu verlassen," he sighed again.

Though it was cool in the sun-shot shade of the arbor, the direct sunlight outside was hot. But Dan enjoyed his walk about the place, which indeed justified its creator's pride. It was a little miracle of order and abundance, from the acres of rose-bloom to the bee-colony up the cañon, rows of little white hives gleaming against the solid wall of chaparral mixed with wild buckwheat, where the bees hummed busily; and the nursery where Rathgeber, who had some fame as a plant-breeder, conducted his experiments in hybridization.

"But de best time to see de roses, of course, is early in de morning," said the old German, looking them over tenderly. "We cut de best buds before de sun reaches dem. Dot is Margaretha's little business

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She supplies two florists, and she also makes pot-pourri and conserve from the petals. You will see dem drying up near the house."

Then he pointed out some curious trees and shrubs. "It is my amusement to see how many of dese foreigners I can make at home here," he said. In a short radius there were, beside the sword and fan palms, olive and fig trees, banana, magnolia, India-rubber, camphor and umbrella trees, a hedge of Chinese lemons, pomegranate and guava bushes; a sago-palm from Ceylon, tea-plants from China, a silver-tree from South America.

"It is a friendly soil," said Rathgeber. "It will receive anyt'ing and give it a home. Dot's because it had not'ing to start with itself, maybe. Well, perhaps de yucca palm and de yellow poppy, but most everyt'ing else comes from abroad. De sycamore is an Oriental, like all dese others. De eucalyptus comes from Australia, de pepper-tree from Chili. And de people, too, de same. Now you and I, we are exotics, hein? You are not born here?"

"No, but I'm planted here like your queer trees!"

"Ah, but you have no roots here, like dem—and like me. Often I want to go back to Strasburg, but I can never give up my place here."

"Perhaps my town will tie me here, too," Dan said, laughing. "But I see I shall have to find another hill for my hotel."

"Truly you will. But your town must first have roots itself before you care much about it."

"That oughtn't to take long. A soil that can raise a forest in ten years ought to be able to raise a town in one."

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Rathgeber shook his head solemnly.

"It must have some life to start with. You have only planted money in dot land."

They came round to the front of the house as he spoke, and looked down upon the site, where the workmen were now putting in the last of the electric-light poles. In its raw beginning Dan's creation certainly did look out of harmony with the natural beauty of springing grass, tree and flower. Dan could even share Rathgeber's point of view and admit that it was, in some sort, a blot on the scene.

"But you ought not to bear me a grudge," he said as he took leave. "Think of the eighteen thousand."

Rathgeber put out a hand not too clean and gave a cordial grip.

"I wish you success," he said. "Auf morgen. For you must come again."

As Dan travelled back in the train to the city he smiled at the recollection of this interview, and thought of telling Anna about it. But the second thought was against it, as, indeed, was now generally the case with his daily experience. Business detail and talk about commonplace people bored Anna. And besides she would probably not take a humorous view of Rathgeber's attitude toward Dan's enterprise. In fact, she seldom took a humorous view of anything. In trying to consider her feelings and prejudices, Dan had by this time come to efface a large part of himself from her view, and when they talked together it was generally of their joint affairs or of hers. The habit of his life helped him to overcome that impulse to confidence which Anna discouraged. And, unable

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to talk of what occupied his mind, he was now sometimes silent when she would have preferred conversation. But his silence was never sulky or dead; he was simply preoccupied and at night generally tired. Very often he made an effort to meet Anna on her own ground. Just now especially he was eager to do this, and with her or absent had her constantly in his mind. For Anna was going through experiences of her own that made her more than ever the centre of her own world,—and of his.

Having spent two hours at his office, Daniel stopped at a florist's and bought a huge bunch of Anna's favorite violets—the purple single kind with long stems and broad petals. They were to have some people at dinner that night, and Anna wanted to go to a dance afterward. He reached the house a little after six. The maid was lighting the lamps in the parlors, and, looking in for a moment, Dan perceived a festal note in the vases and bowls of red roses that stood on all the little tables and on the piano. He saw also that the girl, besides her usual uniform of black and white, wore a cap, and recognized that Anna had won a victory over Irish-American independence. Smiling he went on upstairs.

The first door to the right in the upper hall led into a room which Dan and Anna in their first gay days in the new house had named "the nursery." The room was empty as yet, the door locked and the key in the lock outside. Dan glanced at it as he passed. They would, at no very distant date, be furnishing that room.

In their bedroom Anna was sitting before her dressing-table doing her hair. She smiled faintly into the

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mirror at Dan when he tossed the violets into her lap and bent to kiss her.

"See, I've done it the way you like," she said as she turned her head and put in the last hair-pin. Her hair was thick but short; drawn back loosely in two heavy waves covering the tips of her ears, it made a small knot at the nape of her neck. She took up a white rosebud from its little vase on the dressing-table, dried its stem, and fastened it in the knot behind her left ear. Then she threw off her dressing jacket and stood up. Dan, having taken off his coat and collar, stood looking at her.

She appeared very well, with color in her cheeks and lips; and the marked change of expression in her face had certainly not lessened its beauty. Indeed, the shade of melancholy that replaced her former rather aggressive self-confidence, the slight languor of her movements, gave her a wholly new charm. With her blond hair so simply dressed, and her large eyes half-veiled by their heavy lids, she momentarily suggested the Madonna type.

She went to put on her dress, which was spread out on the bed, and said without looking up, "Hadn't you better begin to dress? I want you to see if the champagne is all right. Sarah didn't know which kind to put in the ice."

"Yes, I'll see about it now."

When he came back Anna was standing before the cheval-glass, waiting for him to fasten her dress, which laced up the back. It was a white silk, heavy and lustreless, made very plainly to show the majestic contours of her figure, and embroidered in white about the low decolléage. It had short sleeves of lace and

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a square train, and was Anna's favorite gown. When Dan had painstakingly finished the lacing, she looked at herself from head to foot in the mirror, then turned, saying, "Am I all right?"

"You are too beautiful, almost," he answered in a low tone. His admiration of her was no longer light-hearted or gay. There was now always a tinge of pain in it, his tenderness seemed almost remorseful.

Anna at once went out of the room.

"You must hurry—you have only fifteen minutes," she said plaintively over her shoulder. "I'm going to see about the table."

She went down the stairs slowly trailing her rich dress, the tips of her fingers sliding over the banisters. She was afraid of falling now. Half-way down, the tears came into her eyes, but by the time she reached the bottom stair she had conquered them.

She walked through the parlors, and noted with satisfaction the effect of the new shades which she had bought that afternoon for the lamps and candles. On the dinner table the same scheme of color was used, and the plateau of crimson roses and ferns in the centre, with the crimson shaded candles at the four corners, together with the silver-gilt bon-bon dishes, and the array of silver and of gold decorated glasses at each plate, made a brightly gay effect. Anna had seen carefully to each detail beforehand. She got a wonderfully keen pleasure out of all these possessions; even the care of them was a pleasure. She had the disposition, if not the training of a housewife.

She went into the butler's pantry for a moment to give some last directions to the cook, and then re-

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turned to the parlor with the cry of admiration warm in her ears: "Oh, ma'am, you look like a queen. I niver in me life saw anything like you for beauty!"

The dinner was to be a small one—only the Goodwins and two of Dan's bachelor acquaintances—but it was Anna's most ambitious attempt so far. She was a little nervous, but not so much excited as she would have liked to be. A vague veil of sadness dimmed the present for her and blurred the future, for which she had made such minute plans that could not now be carried out. However, she clung to what pleasure she could get; and she was as determined to go to the cotillion that night as Dan was reluctant to let her go.

When he came downstairs just on the stroke of seven, Anna looked him over carefully and, finding nothing in his attire to criticise, she said: "I ordered the carriage for half-past ten."

Dan's face clouded.

"I wish you wouldn't go," he said imploringly. "You must be careful."

"It's nonsense your not wanting me to go," Anna cried. "I feel perfectly well. How could it hurt me?"

"Well, if you would just go for a little while—and not dance——"

"How could I go and not dance? That's silly. Of course I shall dance."

"Anna, I can't bear to have you do it. I'm afraid some accident——"

A sob interrupted him.

"Oh, it's cruel that I can't have even a little bit of pleasure! I don't see what's the use of living in such a world. I shall die—I know I shall——"

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"Anna, Anna!" he cried. "For God's sake, don't! You shall go if you want to so much. Don't cry, don't, my darling, I can't bear it——"

He held her firmly, though she shrank back, and his voice was like a sob. Anna laughed hysterically and pushed him away as the door-bell trilled faintly.

"We are a nice pair. They'll find us in tears. You have mussed my hair, too."

She fled into the back parlor, where there was a mirror in the mantel-piece. The tears had left no trace. And as Dan followed her she threw herself into his arms and clung to him.

"I will be good, and not dance *much*," she said pathetically.

VII.

THE dinner, Anna felt, was a success; and the dance, too, proved so. She had a flattering amount of attention and yet was content to come away early. She enjoyed every moment of it; was, she protested triumphantly, not even tired the next day; and was very sweet to Dan for days afterward. In spite of the constant alloy in her happiness they still had some completely happy hours together.

[Dan's delight in the prospect of the child often overbore Anna's dread; and she had her times of being glad as well as rather astonished that he should be so happy. She softened to him slowly; but more and more she was coming to depend on him and to need him.

And yet he felt more and more that she needed, or at least that she wanted, a good deal beyond him. She was eager to be a woman of affairs, to have a large establishment, many clubs, a church—she wished to join the fashionable Episcopalians, and a visiting list including “everybody.” She wanted to connect herself by these various threads with innumerable little points of interest. She had set busily about weaving her social web, having its exact pattern definitely in her mind; and already she had accomplished something. Mrs. Goodwin, a middle-aged woman of worldly cultivation and very outspoken humor, had been struck by Anna's beauty and

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youth, and still more taken by the earnestness with which she went about her business—being indeed infinitely diverted by simplicity of any sort. She had asked Anna to receive with her at a tea which practically introduced Anna to the women she was most anxious to know. Mrs. Goodwin was one of the patronesses of the cotillion, and Anna had made her first appearance there under a very efficient wing.

She often rose above her fears, was amiable and cheerful for days together, and would plan happily with Dan for the future. But also she had her frequent moods of rebellion and desire for excitement, which Dan's opposition only intensified into hard recklessness. To these moods Dan always had to yield against his own judgment. She knew too well how to silence his protest, by a fit of tears, by outcries against her hard lot. As she saw the time fast approaching when she must give up her pleasures for some months at least, when there would be no more afternoon teas or calls, nor the occasional dinner or dance, nor even the delight of exhibiting her beauty, Anna insisted all the more eagerly on getting what she could.

Thus she was determined to go to the second cotillion, which was given on the tenth of January. Unknown to Dan, she had gone down the day before, in company with a number of the young women and some idle men, to help decorate the hall. They had spent a gay morning making and hanging huge scarlet flower-balls of tissue-paper, and garlands and wreaths of evergreens. There were to be potted palms in the corners, a frieze of palm-leaves around

the wall, and fresh flowers put in at the last moment. They all agreed it was immensely successful.

One of the young men so superior to the calls of business was Abram De Ronde the second. He was close at Anna's side the whole morning, cutting the tissue-paper into the proper shape for her—he had very delicate, deft hands, with the most perfect almond nails—and insisting that she should not blacken her fingers with the evergreen. And when, all being done, and the chattering crowd putting on their wraps, a girl sat down at the piano and rattled off a waltz, it was young De Ronde who swept Anna off into the middle of the room before she could protest. He was shorter and slighter than she, but Anna liked dancing with him better than with anyone else. She had met him at several small private dances, and counted him securely among her admirers. She had wanted to invite him to dinner, but Dan refused, and when pressed for a reason alleged that De Ronde belonged to a race of blood-suckers, and that he, Daniel Devin, hated all of them. Anna was exasperated by this attitude.

"He is certainly much more of a gentleman than some people we have had here," she said coldly. "He has beautiful manners and he is extremely well educated and polished, and talks better than any young man I know."

"Very likely. But considering the business relations between his father and myself, it would be impossible for me to ask him here," Dan said quite as positively.

Anna forbore to press the point then, but privately determined to carry it sooner or later. She liked De

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Ronde very much. His vivid good looks and a certain personal power, which was not natural grace or charm so much as an acquired suavity veiling something mysterious, had impressed her. There was excitement, not without a faint thrill of uneasiness, in being with him, and in perceiving that, notwithstanding she was unable to ask him to her house, they were growing more intimate. Beside him, somehow, the men whom she could ask seemed not only harmless, but brusque and cold.

When the waltz ended and the gay little assembly broke up, De Ronde went with her out of the hall and put her on a cable-car. She would have liked immensely to take him home with her to lunch, but dared not ask him, though she knew Dan would not be there. He was out in the country. In most other things that she wanted to do, and knew Dan would disapprove, she would very likely have gone ahead and told him afterward—as, for example, this morning at the hall, in which she had promised several dances for the next night, and the cotillion, to De Ronde. But the luncheon would be different. Anna wished to be the pink of propriety. She let the handsome boy go with disappointment plain in his face, and thought about him a good deal on the way home. Her dress for the next night was already selected with a view to his admiration—she knew his favorite color was red.

Naturally there was to be a bitter dispute when Dan flatly opposed her going. She told him at dinner that night about her day; he half listening, as was his way of late when he was oppressed with business. But the mention of the dance roused him.

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"I thought it was settled a week ago that you were not to go," he said wearily.

"I don't know how it could have been settled when I didn't agree with you," Anna retorted.

Dan rehearsed his arguments, she her refutations. She thought his excessive carefulness for her, his "worrying over her," unnecessary and stupid. Finally, since he was, this time, really obstinate, Anna bethought herself of a new resource, holding in reserve the last resort of tears.

"I'll ask Mrs. Goodwin," she said. "She knows all about it, and I'm sure she'll think you're silly."

"Better ask the doctor," growled Dan.

Anna thought him very disagreeable. He left the table and betook himself with a cigar to a pile of papers, over which he was still working late in the evening. Anna had seen that he was getting more and more absorbed in his business; that in proportion as he talked less about it he was more often nervous, tired, irritable, and indisposed to talk about anything. Anna sometimes resented this mood of his, sometimes ignored it; never tried to get to the bottom of it.

At luncheon the next day she had a report for Dan, who made one of his rare mid-day appearances.

"Mrs. Goodwin says that once she slipped and fell down a flight of stairs and it never did her the least harm," she said triumphantly.

"That doesn't prove anything," Dan replied.

Anna was voluble in explanations that it did; but after luncheon, when Dan had lit his cigar, kissed her good-bye and gone to put on his coat, she followed him into the hall. She was too proud to lie, even to suppress truth unfavorable to her.

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"Mrs. Goodwin said there was a risk," she reluctantly said. "And that nobody could tell whether it would be safe for me or not."

"There, you see. Now you'll give it up, won't you, dearest?" he implored.

Then the tears filled her eyes and gushed over.

"Just this once," she pleaded, "and I promise I'll never ask again."

And she sobbed at the forlorn sound of the words.

Dan's over-strained nerves gave way. He flung angrily out of the house.

"Go on, then—but I won't go with you," was his last word.

Anna calmly went on and made her preparations; and at the last moment he gave in, as she had known he would, afraid to let her go alone.

As though she had known that it was really the end, not only of the season, but of the gay life she had hoped for, Anna blazed out that night in beauty that extinguished every other woman in the room. In her scarlet dress she was, many of them said, too startling, too big, too much of everything. But she was the most constant centre of attention. The room, red being the main note of its decoration, seemed designed as a setting for her. She had a lap full of favors, which Dan was commissioned to keep.

And this time she had no pity on his boredom and ill-concealed uneasiness. She danced the few dances before the cotillion—they had come late. At supper she was in the midst of a crowd, away from Dan, talking and laughing gayly. And she danced through the cotillion—Dan was none too pleased to see De Ronde as her partner—rather wildly toward the end.

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At three in the morning the dance had become a romp. Some of the men were decidedly unsteady, for though no wine was served with the supper there were evidently private sources of refreshment.

It was one of these men, whirling with a giggling girl in his arms, round the room, who managed somehow, by stumbling over her train, to precipitate their combined weight against De Ronde as he tried to turn Anna out of their way. He was quick, but too slight to resist the inevitable collision. They were on the edge of the floor. Anna was thrown violently against the line of chairs, and dropped into one, De Ronde saving her from falling. He came to his knees on the floor, while the cause of the trouble suffered not at all.

Dan, watching sombrely from the other side of the room, was the first to see Anna's mishap, and the first at her side. He cut short the apologies of the culprit and of De Ronde, and Anna's assurances that she was not the least hurt. In reality she was as white as he.

"Don't make a scene," she whispered, as he lifted her to her feet.

"Come away!"

"Of course. It's over anyway," she smiled.

In fact, the music had stopped, and they were only among the first to leave. Anna insisted on saying her good-nights, and on having all her favors gathered up and carried home with her. When they got into the carriage she began to cry from the shock, and by the end of the rather long drive she was in pain and terrified.

It was two hours after they reached home before the doctor came—the longest two hours of Dan's life.

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There was no sleep for him that night, nor for several nights after. Though a nurse was installed the next day, he insisted on watching by Anna; and spent most of his time, day as well as night, in her darkened room, mourning over her, and blaming his own weakness. He found no time to grieve over the end of their hope for the child, till Anna was beginning to get her strength back, and the slow process of recovery plainly begun.

Not till then, either, did he feel the full force of the financial blow that had fallen on him. It was during the first days of Anna's illness that the sale at Blaine took place. And while she was too weak to share or know anything about any new misfortune he had to face the result—complete and crushing failure.

VIII.

AS a huge breaker, piling up higher and higher in its onward rush, halts for an instant at the highest before it falls, so in the craze of speculation there had come a sudden lull. Just before the holidays the volume of sales dropped in a few days nearly one-fourth, and at once a good many timid people, and those who were only slightly involved, began to "pull out from under." But the greater number were those who did not see the crest of the wave impending and curling to the crash over them, but were carried along in it, and could not realize that its strength was spent. They felt the pause, but took it lightly enough; the holiday season was not a good one for business—the new year would see a fresh start, and a faster pace than ever. Among these sanguine souls was Daniel Devin, who had simply postponed the sale at Blaine until the second week in January, and meanwhile made no effort to sell anything.

But the number who were trying to sell was by no means inconsiderable, and had the natural effect on the market. The amount of sales dropped in two weeks more to one-fourth, to one-eighth. The holidays were past now. Several Pullman excursions had come in; the tourists crowded every hotel and lodging-house, but they kept their money in their pockets. The whole city then began to be sensible that something serious had happened. The citizens

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blamed the coming Presidential election, the tax collector, and the envy of the Eastern newspapers, which for some months had been filled with abuse of California and the boom, as much exaggerated as their previous praise had been. But still they could not believe that they would have to wait till spring for the rush to begin again.

So Dan felt at least, and taking the day after a Pullman excursion reached the city, he risked his sale. That it was a risk he knew, but he was obliged to take it. A note for \$5,000, held by De Ronde's bank, fell due in a week, and he would have to meet it. Within a few days he had paid half that amount to Emmons's representative, and as much more on a note to another bank. The first payment to Rathgeber, the cost of the material and work on the town-site, and his living expenses, had swallowed up his ready money, the proceeds of his sale on the Emmons ranch. He held notes at sixty and ninety days for the second and third payments on that land, and if he could have collected their amount, or even half of it, he might have tided over. But out of forty thousand dollars due, he could get only five thousand.

The scramble had begun. Now it was save himself who can. The banks called in their loans. The real-estate market was swamped with all kinds of holdings, thrown in for what they would bring. Money tightened with a snap. There was no more coming into the community. There was a vast amount still going out for lumber, water-pipe, railroad iron and cement, material already ordered for improvements; and for the luxuries of the table and of dress, suitable to the station of prospective million-

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naires. The moment the wheels stopped this drain became unbearable.

It was on the edge of the resulting panic that Dan tried to launch his enterprise. With the clatter and blare of a brass band to head the procession; wagons filled with lumber for the hotel, so labelled that all who ran might read; omnibuses placarded with the offer of a free ride and a free lunch and a glowing description of the property, he strove to lure the stranger. For it was certain that the native could buy no more, even if he would.

The day was a perfect one; the air cool, clear and sunlit; and in every dooryard and vacant space grass and trees were green, and flowers bloomed incessantly. The tourist might read in his morning paper of the blizzards under which cowered the frozen East, together with a complacent editorial comparison of the temperatures of New York and Los Angeles. Nor could he gather from the columns of the paper that the boom was not still progressing toward its apogee. If he went out on the streets he would still find them crowded, would still hear the familiar bray of the brass band, and see work on the new monster hotel and numerous other buildings still going on. And yet he bought not.

Dan's omnibuses were full of well-to-do excursionists who went to look on at the much-heralded novelty of a land-auction, but who had not the remotest notion of buying any "wild-cat town lots." In the early days of the boom or at its meridian such a crowd had often been swept off its feet by the contagion of enthusiasm aided by the arts and eloquence of the auctioneer. But now the general temperature had

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dropped to freezing-point. Mr. Stoneman's most dulcet tones fell into this icy void and brought no response. Dan was too late. The tread of ten thousand had trampled down his field. And though his spirit had been very different from that of the self-recognized speculator who aimed simply to exploit the country for his own profit and to get out before the inevitable crash, yet he was confounded in the result with the less shrewd of those gentry, who had merely miscalculated the time when the crash would be due.

Dan had not taken a possible crash into account at all, until the shadow of it was upon him. He had a genuine faith and expectation that the country would honor the large draft drawn against it. And it was inevitable that he should back that faith heavily. He would have considered that otherwise he should not deserve success. Dan never feared his fate; in his opinion his desert was large; and therefore he dared, in the spirit of the old rhyme, "put it to the touch, to win or lose it all." He would have held that fortune does not reward the niggardly; or at least that it is not worth while being niggardly, for any fortune. And to reconcile these two positions—that of the soldier of fortune who risks himself with generous freedom, and that of the business man who is simply confident that he has a good thing—it is only necessary to appeal to Dan's temperament. He was both. But he considered himself a business man. He took extraordinary risks easily by virtue of not regarding them as such; by regarding them as the ordinary chances which any man of spirit and enterprise must take.

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In the present instance, indeed, he had done only what many of his associates did without real loss. He had "played on velvet." He had used in speculation only the money that he had made in real estate in the two years past. That, to be sure, was all the ready money he possessed. But he still had what he started with—his stock in the *Clarion*, and, nominally at least, his position on the paper; though he had not done any work on it for months, nor drawn his salary of thirty dollars a week. His place had not been filled. During boom-time the most pressing need was for clerks to take care of the business that came in, rather than a manager to work it up. Dan often met the owner of the *Clarion* outside and was on perfectly friendly terms with him. So far, he stood on his old footing, or at least could regain it.

If he had imitated the more cautious speculators in another respect, and bought his sixty-acre tract practically on an option, he might have been able to free himself from his minor entanglements. But Rathgeber had been shrewd and obstinate, and he had Dan's note.

Before that note matured in the middle of February it was evident to the most hopeful that the boom was "busted." The bottom was out and the pieces were not worth saving. The paper millionaires were now land-poor. Most of them, like Dan, had spread out their money to hold as much land as possible, and now tried to throw this land back on the market to save the first payment—with failure like his. Dan could not sell a rod of his land. But he managed to meet the note held by De Ronde's bank; though to do it he had not only to sell his

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horses and carriages, and give a chattel mortgage on his furniture, but also to help push into bankruptcy a man who had been a large buyer at the Emmons sale.

But what of that? The whole town was bankrupt, it seemed to Dan, except indeed the banks and loan agents. Hundreds of families were ruined; were leaving their homes for smaller quarters, giving up all luxuries, and in many cases what they had been accustomed to think necessities—servants, for example—and when possible leaving the city. Among these were many of the acquaintances the Devins had made during their brief social career.

It was impossible that Anna should not know what was happening, though Dan kept it from her as long as he could. As she grew strong enough to leave her bed, though not the house, she wondered why her visitors, instead of increasing in number, fell off. Then she began to hear tales of trouble, though not first from her own family. Dan had forbidden Mrs. Quartermain to talk to Anna on the subject, but he could not control the tongues of all her feminine callers. Elise Andrews, the friend of Anna's girlhood, was earliest in the field with her hard-luck story. Her father had been a prosperous lawyer and chief support of Mr. Quartermain's church. They lived in a large old-fashioned house on what was now one of the main business streets. That house had been sold, and they were moving into a "bandbox" on the outskirts of the city; and, Elise wept as she told it, she could now not be married in the spring, as she had expected. Charley's father was ruined, too. And Charley, who had never done any work in his

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life, would at twenty-seven be obliged to earn his own living. He was trying to find something to do.

Anna was shocked, and, being still nervously weak, cried too. And later in the afternoon, when her mother made her almost daily visit, Anna poured out the story to her. Mrs. Quartermain burst into tears.

"They aren't the only ones," she sobbed. "Since Mr. Andrews failed, all the well-to-do people in the church have either left or lost their money, too. Your father hasn't had any of his salary for two months. I don't know what we're going to do. You are very lucky if Daniel has managed to pull through all right."

Anna began to tremble. When the man had come to take an inventory of the furniture Dan had told her that he was having it insured. When, on the occasion of her first drive a fortnight since, she had noticed with surprise the inferior team and carriage, Dan had said carelessly, "Yes, these are hired. I sold the others—was too busy to drive them and they were eating their heads off in the stable." And he had promised to buy others for her.

Now she thought of the horses, though not of the furniture. She resolved to question Dan that night; and controlling herself proudly, replied to her mother:

"Oh, we're all right. Something must be done about father. I will talk to Dan about it."

Then she threw herself back among her cushions and shut her eyes; that was the signal for her mother's departure.

Anna lay still for a long time; and only the fluttering of her closed eyelids might show that she was not asleep. She had lost both in weight and color by her illness; the former at least a gain in actual beauty.

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In the soft loose white dress her figure looked younger, more girlish than before, and her face, pale and with the chastened look of physical weakness, was more appealing.

She was questioning her memory to know if there was anything beside the incident of the horses——. No, she could not find anything. The house had been kept up, so far as she knew, just as usual. Dan had seen to everything—the ordering and so on. The servants were the same. She had had expensive food, fruit, flowers, and old port. And she had not seen any bills. Most likely it was all right. Supposing some people were ruined? There were the Goodwins, for instance, who weren't. Mrs. Goodwin was going abroad for a year. She had been Anna's most constant and cheerful visitor. Surely she must have known, if anything was wrong.

That afternoon Dan made his first visit in weeks at the *Clarion* office and had a long talk with the owner, Eldridge, in his private room. He wanted to realize on his *Clarion* stock, the only available asset that he now had.

Eldridge, a stout, untidy man with a cool gray eye and a sceptical mouth, heard him through with only a nod here and there, and then said, shifting his cigar to the corner of his mouth:

"Hadn't you better stay with us?"

"How can I?" said Dan. He had been walking up and down the small space not occupied by Eldridge's colossal desk and chairs, files of papers, a movable book-case, spittoons, a fox-terrier, and a safe. Now he flung himself into a chair fronting the light of the unshaded windows and Eldridge's gaze. He looked

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tired, his eyes slightly blood-shot, his ruddy color a little faded, but he was as carefully shaved, dressed and brushed as ever.

"Well, thirty a week isn't much, I know, but it's something," Eldridge drawled. "I know plenty of fellows that were driving their own horses and drinking champagne a month ago, that would be glad to get it. But I don't want them, I want you. I can't offer you any more now, for we're trimming our sails pretty close at present. But mind you, the *Clarion's* as solid as a rock, and we'll weather it, and there's something ahead for you. There are mighty few men with the amount of hustle that you've got in this country—and there'll be still fewer by spring."

"That's it," Dan said gloomily. "Hustling isn't going to pay in this town for some time to come. And I can't live on air meanwhile. I reckon I'll have to join the procession and move out, if I can get out."

"Well, there you are. You *can't* get out at present with anything but your skin. Your stock in this paper is worth five thousand dollars. If you force a sale now you can't get more than two. I'll give you two thousand for it, and I venture to say that nobody else in town will give you a cent. And that's not because anybody doubts the *Clarion*, but because nobody's buying anything except grub these days. And not too damn much of that. Now, thirty dollars a week will at least give you grub, and if you'll take my advice you'll take that, and hold on—and a year or so will see us through the pinch."

"A year or so," Dan said bitterly. "I can't do it. My wife—she isn't well, and I can't ask her to rough

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it. And then, confound it—I—I can't go back and do what I was doing two years ago."

Eldridge smiled cynically.

"I know. You've been feeling your oats—you've been living pretty high—independent capitalist and all that. You don't want to go into harness again—natural enough. But, my dear boy, you'll see worse falls than that among the high-flyers yet, mark my words. And it won't hurt the country, either. We'll be pretty dead for a year, I grant you—maybe two. But I don't believe a bank will go under. I don't believe an important business house of any kind, except the few that had fools at the head of them, will fail. And you can't keep this town down long. She's bound to come up again, and when she does, we'll come with her. No more booms, though."

Eldridge puffed at his cigar for a few moments in silence. Dan was looking absently out of the window. Finally, he glanced at Eldridge and shook his head smiling.

"Not good enough," he said.

"Oh, come, what have you got up your sleeve?" demanded Eldridge.

"I have got something, that's a fact," Dan admitted. "Something that takes me well out of this country. So I'll trouble you for that two thousand if convenient."

"Can't you tell me what it is?"

"Not now—too indefinite. I will, though, when it's decided."

There was a knock on the door and a card was brought in to Eldridge.

"Ask him to wait a few minutes," he said. "And

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here"—writing a few words on a *Clarion* letter-head—"take that down to Mr. Farman, and wait and bring me his answer."

He turned to Dan.

"I'm having a check made out for what's due you on salary—it must be two or three hundred."

"Well—I don't know that it is due—it strikes me I haven't been earning any salary lately," Dan said, with some embarrassment.

"Oh, that's all right. You're on the books, you know. And in a way you helped to work up a big business for us in the last year," and Eldridge chuckled, not unkindly.

When the check was brought, Dan rose, and the two men shook hands heartily.

"If you change your mind, so much the better," Eldridge repeated. "If not, come round and we'll fix up that matter in a day or so."

"You're a good fellow," said Dan. "I'd stay with you if anybody, Eldridge. But it's no use, I couldn't stand it. I can count on the two thousand?"

"Oh, you can count on it, all right. I'll make fifty per cent. Only"—he caught Dan by the arm—"before you put it into anything else, for the Lord's sake let me know, will you? I know a gold brick at longer range than you do."

Dan promised carelessly and went away lighter at heart, not only from the prospect of the two thousand dollars, but also the actual possession of a much smaller amount. The check was for three hundred dollars, and was welcome out of all proportion to its size. It would not pay the tradesmen's bills—which Dan tore up as fast as he got them, so that Anna

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should not see them—but it would help him to make the move which he had now practically decided on.

When he reached the house he found Anna lying as her mother had left her, thought her asleep, and was leaving the room on tiptoe when she spoke to him. Her voice was languid, dragged a little as it never had done before her illness. Dan pulled up a chair beside her sofa and sat down.

"Whew, I'm tired," he sighed, rubbing his hands over his face and hair. "How are you, dearest?"

"Oh, about the same. I have been rather upset to-day—mother and Elise were here, both in the dumps and crying——"

"Damn it!" cried Dan, setting his teeth. "Your mother promised me she wouldn't bother you. I'll keep the whole lot of them out now—confound women, anyhow!"

"Don't be angry and swear, you bad boy—it is just as bad as crying." Anna put out her hand from under the shawl that covered her and smiled. In reality she rather liked to see him angry, and to hear him swear, in behalf of herself. And the sight of him, the strength and energy which she felt in him the more from her own physical weakness and languor, comforted her, drove away the vaguer and more terrible fears that had haunted her. Dan had not the look of failure. But he did look tired out. He put her fingers to his lips; then slid down on the floor and laid his head against her shoulder, sighing deeply.

"It's a shame they should bother you," he repeated drowsily. "Lord, how sleepy I am! I haven't stopped all day except for a piece of pie and glass of milk at noon."

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"Don't go to sleep now, it's dinner time," said Anna. "Besides I want to talk to you."

"All right—I'm listening."

She stroked his forehead lightly with the tips of her fingers.

"How long your hair is! There are little rings here over your ear."

"Yes; must get it cut to-morrow."

"And you are getting gray, do you know it? There are lots of white hairs at your temples—why, I never noticed them before!"

"I'm getting old—twelve years older than you, you know. I feel about a hundred to-night."

"Is anything the matter?" Anna nervously plunged in. "I have been so worried. Mother hinted there might be something wrong. So many people are having hard times. But you wouldn't keep it from me, would you?"

He was silent and only tightened his grasp on her hand.

"Dan!"

Now he raised his head and looked at her.

"I couldn't tell you, when you were ill."

She pushed him away and sat up.

"Tell me what it is! How bad is it? Have we lost everything, like the Andrews?"

Then Dan, with a certain sense of relief that he could speak out at last, found himself trying to explain the situation to an excited woman who could not grasp the beginnings of it.

"But why did you keep all this from me? Why didn't you tell me how you were risking your money——?"

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"I often tried, but you wouldn't listen. You never wanted to hear anything about business."

"But I never thought you would do anything like this! I trusted you—I thought your business was safe. You certainly gave me that impression."

"I thought so myself till a month or so ago," said Dan meekly.

He was not beaten down by Anna's reproaches. He thought it perfectly natural that she should be upset, and she had taken it better than he expected. If only she did not break down and cry—he could stand her anger much more easily. She did not look like crying. She sat bolt upright, renewed color in her face and sparkle in her eyes, much like her old self.

"How bad is it?" she demanded. "What must we do?"

Dan responded freely, frankly, gladly. Her attitude helped him immensely. Not to cry over spilt milk, but to turn to the future and action—that was brave of her! It was his own way, but he had not dared expect it of a frail feminine creature—at least, not at first. Happily he had a definite plan and course already mapped out.

Throwing himself again into the chair facing her—and wide-awake enough now—he took half a dozen letters from his breast-pocket, read them to her, interspersing them with comments, and then laid them one above the other on her knee. Anna sat silent, her face and body rigid and her color slowly dying out. The technical details of Dan's proposition escaped her; she gathered that the letters were from a man in Wyoming, and concerned a copper-mine in which he wanted Dan to invest, promising that it

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would make the fortune of all concerned if it were once developed. These letters had been written to Dan as a moneyed man in the flush of success; but Manlove asked him, in case he couldn't see his way to investing himself, to try and send some capital his way, and offered a large commission.

"You mean we should leave here?" Anna said when she had gone over them all.

"For a time, anyway. We might come back if you think you would rather live here."

"I don't know any other place. But I shouldn't like to stay on here and be poor. Have we lost everything?"

Then Dan explained again. What they had lost was his profit of two years. They still had what he had started with, his stock and position on the *Clarion*.

"Eldridge asked me to come back. But the salary is small. I shouldn't like to do it—and you wouldn't either, would you? It is only thirty dollars a week."

"No, indeed! If you can do anything better. But I don't understand about profits! I thought really that when we were married you had a good deal of property."

The action of the boom upon property could not at once be grasped by Anna's intelligence. What she did grasp was that Dan had been strangely foolish, but that there were extenuating circumstances, namely, for one, the number of other foolish persons in the same predicament. It was a good deal of comfort to Anna to know that the Richardsons, the Morgans, the Damons and many another were ruined too; even that Charley Feltner, Elise's fiancé, had

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taken a clerkship at ten dollars a week, and that the two daughters of Judge Carpenter were trying to get positions as typewritists. It was not that she rejoiced in the misfortune of these persons—but it was necessary to her to feel that she could still have confidence in Dan. Where so many solid men had gone down his failure lost something of its personal aspect, and seemed more a part of a public calamity.

So she shed no tears; and though the coldness of her manner showed that she had by no means forgiven Dan, their dinner that night was more animated than for some time past. To be sure, it was Dan who supplied the animation. He talked eagerly about the Wyoming enterprise. He had an astonishing amount of details and figures at his fingers' ends, and poured them out with nervous profusion. Mainly they were Greek to Anna. She listened half-absently, still bewildered from the shock, trying to adjust herself to the new situation. What questions she asked were largely about the character of the country—how were they to live there? Dan evaded this point. As a matter of fact, he was sure that it would be impossible to take Anna with him, but he left this dreaded point in doubt till after his return from a journey of inspection.

Before he went to Wyoming Dan transferred his *Clarion* stock to Eldridge, and banked the two thousand dollars with De Ronde in Anna's name. He intended to pay all his small debts, but not immediately. Emmons, too, would have to wait for his last twenty-five hundred. Meantime there was Rathgeber to be reckoned with. The note that he held for \$10,000 was now due, and Dan had not the glim-

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mering of a possibility of paying it. He went out and told Rathgeber so very frankly.

"Well, I expected it would be so," said the old man sarcastically. "What shall we do about it, hein?"

"I have paid you eight thousand dollars for land that is worth now about fifty dollars an acre," said Dan. "Give me twenty acres clear for the eight thousand, and take back the other forty; or else take my city lots in payment of the balance."

Such propositions were being made and accepted every day, for the process of liquidation had begun immediately after the crash.

Rathgeber refused.

"But I will not press for de ten t'ousand," he said. "Deed me back de sixty acres and you lose de eight t'ousand dollars only."

That was the rule in the larger number of such cases, and Dan, after some protests, found himself obliged to yield.

"Very well," he said shortly. "It's a hard proposition, but you can force it, of course. Let's get it over with."

"I tell you," said Rathgeber suddenly. "I don't want to be hard. I'm rich and I don't need to be. I tell you what I will do. You promise to work dot land and I tear up your note, and de sixty acres are yours. It's a shame de land should stand idle, and I got all I can manage now. I want to see it improved. You take it and work it and I sell you on credit all de young vines and trees you want; and I lend you some money to start with. And if you come out here to settle I put up a little house. Now what do you say? You can't help but make money.

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In four, five years you have a nice place clear of debt paying you several t'ousand a year. You will?"

Genuine anxiety and kindness showed in his rough face.

"I can't," Dan said slowly, "I can't wait so long. My wife—she isn't well and she couldn't live out here. And we couldn't afford to live in town."

He was thus explicit in recognition of Rathgeber's good intention.

"We will do all we can," urged the old farmer. "I put up a nice little house. And Margaretha—she is good; she will be glad to help your wife so much as she can. Or maybe you could board with us at first. We got a nice spare room——"

Dan shook his head, smiling ruefully.

"It wouldn't do. You're very kind, but it's impossible. I've made other plans. I'm going away. I'll have to accept your other proposition. Take the land and give me back my note."

So it was settled and Dan departed. And while Rathgeber, pottering about his roses, shook his head every now and then, with a sigh or a muttered exclamation, "Too bad! Too bad!" Dan on his way back to the city was carrying with him his last glimpse of Blaine—a patchwork of grass and raw streaks of red earth, a few tall, lonely poles, piles of pine lumber, lines of unconnected lengths of pipe—all those useless, melancholy relics, cumbering the soil in which he had, as Rathgeber said, "planted" his money—a sterile seed.

IX.

DAN came back from his three weeks' stay in Wyoming refreshed, full of life and enthusiasm. His almost daily letters had kept Anna informed of his movements and given her some idea of the place and the prospect to which he was committing himself. She was prepared, therefore, for his decision in favor of an immediate removal, and also in a measure for their temporary separation.

"If you were perfectly strong," Dan said sorrowfully, "we might risk your going. But I don't dare take you there now. In the spring or summer you shall come, unless by that time I can arrange for us to live in some place that you'd like better. It will only be two or three months. I shall be working hard—you'll be getting strong—and in a year at most I'm convinced we shall be on our feet again. There's a fortune in those mines, without a doubt."

If he had urged it in the least Anna would have gone with him; she wanted to go, though his description of the country, in spite of its complete novelty to her, excited rather terror than interest in her mind. Of two hard alternatives she would have preferred being snowed up with Dan on the top of a mountain to being left alone amid the wreck of her short-lived comfort. But Dan's conviction that it was impossible for her to go silenced her. He was inclined always to under-estimate her strength, to expect less of

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her than she was really capable of; and she was inclined to take herself at his estimate. Being treated as a hot-house plant to which the rude breath of the winter would be dangerous, she resigned herself, with a certain listlessness, to be one.

Life in the mining-town where Dan must establish himself would assuredly be a sufficient contrast to anything that Anna had known. She heard with astonishment that the snow now lay fifteen and twenty feet deep on the mountain-top where this little settlement of Mallory was situated. She who had never seen snow, except as a white shimmer on far-away mountain-peaks, could not conceive how it would seem to be buried in it as Mallory was now; each house covered up to the second story (they were all built with two stories in order not to be covered completely); and the inhabitants walking out from their second-story doors upon a solid crust of snow fifteen feet above the ground.

Mallory, Dan told her, had one street, thirteen houses, two stores, and a "hotel," where he was to live. Near it, and all the way down the mountain slopes, were the copper-mines, whence the ore was transported by sleighs through Grandview and River City, larger towns in the valley, to Ralston on the railway, and thence to Denver or Chicago to be smelted. From Ralston a six-horse stage-line ran to River City, thirty miles; beyond that, mountain-wagons, or in their season sleighs, took you up. It meant little to Anna that Mallory was ten thousand feet above the sea and on the summit of the Continental Divide; but a good deal that the snow-drifts lay in some places about it until the end of August,

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and that about the first of September snow began to fall again.

However, Dan had been told by people living there that the short summers were beautiful, and he could testify that the air even now was the best and most exhilarating he had ever breathed. Manlove's family—wife and two children—stayed there the year through. They were a strong, healthy lot—Mrs. Manlove a plain, pleasant woman—and had been very cordial to him. He thought he should be comfortable enough at the "hotel," where there was now only one boarder, though in summer they had more. The living was rough and primitive, of course—mostly canned things—since they had to bring all their supplies sixty miles from the railroad. His life would not be luxurious, nor would Anna's—but they would make up for it afterward, when Dan had made his "pile."

There remained the question of Anna's living meantime. She understood that their house must be given up; she proposed taking a smaller house, in order to keep the furniture that she was so fond of. Dan's proposition he made with a good deal of hesitation. He was paying—or owing—four per cent a month on the chattel mortgage, by which he had raised eight hundred dollars on the furniture, but he preferred not to tell Anna that, or that they must lose it anyway. He suggested that they should "let it go" (by which Anna understood sell it), because every dollar that he could raise was needed in the new business, which was true enough; and that Anna should board with her parents for the next few months. In that way she would be looked after, and

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he would feel easier about her, and it would also help her family—and they absolutely needed help.

Anna acquiesced sombrely. She knew that something must be done for her parents, that she could not ask Dan to give them money, even if they would have taken it; she agreed that this was probably the only practicable scheme. As to the furniture, Dan never guessed what its loss cost her. It was not only that she had a real love for these pretty and elegant things—but they were the last tangible evidence of prosperity; the last, that is, except her personal belongings, and even these she dumbly expected to sacrifice.

The day after Dan's return, when they had finally settled everything, when Anna had consented to leave the house with all its contents, and smiled faintly at Dan's promise that she should have ten times as fine a place before long, she went upstairs and got out her diamond ornaments, took off all her rings except her marriage-ring, and laid them out on her bureau for a last lingering inspection.

"You will have to sell these, too, I suppose," she said tragically, when Dan came in.

He was silent for a moment—the money certainly would be useful. But the sight of Anna's face reflected in the mirror—the heavy, downcast eyelids with their suggestion of tears, the melancholy mouth—moved him too much.

"No—keep them, you poor girl!" he cried tenderly. "We'll get on somehow. You've been so brave and good—I never dared expect you would take it so well."

Anna had been perfectly calm during all their discussion of practical details—but this vivid allusion to

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her sacrifice, the huskiness of Dan's voice, the appeal in his face as he bent over her, were too much for her self-control. She burst out crying wildly.

"Oh, take me with you!" she sobbed. "I can't stand it to stay here. I couldn't bear it at home before—and how can I now? Oh, take me!"

"Don't you think I would if I could? Don't you know it's a hundred times harder for me than for you, to leave you?" he said despairingly. "But supposing you were ill? There's no doctor nearer than River City. And even if you were well, it would be deadly hard for you. You can't realize what it would mean. You couldn't get a piano even. No, I can't take you there, I don't dare do it."

His will, when it came to action, was so much the stronger that Anna simply gave way. She could resist, but she could not take the initiative. So, helpless, she watched the last frail threads by which she had tried to bind herself to the things she cared for, broken; the slight web of her life, just begun, swept away so completely that one could scarcely say it had been.

Dan left her. She went back to the little house on Figueroa Street; to the tiny bedroom with its yellow wall-paper and worn ingrain rug; to the atmosphere of care and disunion and pinching poverty, that had oppressed her girlhood. Yet there was a difference. Her marriage had set her apart from the family life—or lack of it—and it troubled her much less. For one thing, Herwin was not at home. He had lost his position on the *Clarion*, and now he was a traveling salesman for a San Francisco publishing firm. No doubt he would lose that chance, too, before long,

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but for the present they heard little from him. Again, Anna could use her advantage to see that the money she gave her mother was applied to the household expenses—and she did so. Herwin got none of it. And the last faint shadow of her parents' authority had disappeared. They now made no pretense at control or even at knowing her affairs. They seemed indeed glad to be rid of responsibility, eager to leave her perfectly free.

And they were very kind to her—kinder than ever before, or else she was quicker to feel it. Mrs. Quartermain, on the ground of her not being strong yet, would not let her do any work about the house, except dusting the parlor. And in a more important way she was careful to spare her: there were very few complaints of the family situation, and no references at all to Anna's misfortunes. She was grateful for that reticence. Her father in many shy ways showed his thoughtfulness for her. For some time she took her breakfasts in bed, and he would bring in the tray; almost always putting a flower on it—a pansy or a rose. He would bring her the newspaper, or one of the lighter historical works from his small library. He expressly relieved her from the necessity of attendance at the little church, where he still preached a carefully prepared sermon every Sunday to a handful of people. He made an attempt to talk cheerfully at the meals they shared; and after the dinner at night he would go into the parlor and open the piano, to indicate that if she cared to sing he would be glad to listen.

The state of the piano was a real grief to him; not only its age, but the fact that he could not afford to

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have it tuned for her. But Anna, when she began to sing again, touching the yellow tinkling keys with the utmost lightness, at once felt that here was a rift in the clouds. Her voice was left her, if nothing else. She had the piano tuned, and began to practise regularly, seeming to grow stronger and to bloom again as she sang. The exercise was good for her mentally as well as physically. She brooded less. She spent less time turning over the relics of her past splendor—dresses and trinkets; photographs of herself in her various ball-dresses, or of her parlors, with all the furniture disposed to the best advantage and the perspective managed so that they looked really palatial.

On her bureau she had a small photograph of Dan, and some specimens of copper ore he had sent her—beautiful bits of metal showing rainbow colors. She liked to have these always before her—the rock which held riches, according to Dan, and his strong face, which seemed as surely to promise success. He wrote almost daily, breezy enthusiastic letters, full of hope and of affection—and she kept all these letters and read them over and over again. He was perfectly well, he wrote—the mountain air was a wonderful tonic. They were making good progress in the mines. Manlove was a good fellow, but rather slow. When spring came they could move faster. He was putting in some machinery, but they must have more. There was a small creek running within a few rods of their main mine—"that is, of course, it isn't running now—but when things thaw out I have an idea it can be dammed and turned so as to operate our engines. That will enable us to increase production to—" and so on, with columns of figures, which

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Anna carefully scrutinized, though they did not convey much to her. Dan had not much else to write about, and the daily letter meant as much to him as it did to her; hence the statistics.

She wrote more briefly, but giving the details of her life. She was well. She was practising two hours a day and thought her voice better than before. She was very comfortable; the weather warm and everything in blossom. Mrs. Goodwin had been to see her several times, but on March 3d had started East; she was going to travel in Italy and Spain for a year. Mrs. Grayson had called once; they were going back to Illinois. Her only constant visitor was Elise Andrews. Elise was terribly bitter and moody. She talked about Charley all the time. Dan remembered what an excitable, hot-headed girl she was. She and Charley were more in love than ever—at least Elise was—and they could not marry because Charley was only getting ten dollars a week. Elise wondered if Dan could not find something for Charley to do out there.

Then one day Anna had a dramatic incident to describe. The night before about eleven they had all been wakened by the violent ringing of the door-bell. Mr. Quartermain had gone to the door in a dressing-gown; then he came back and held a whispered conference with his wife. Anna could hear them through the wall, and could hear voices in the parlor. She was alarmed and went to ask her father through the crack in the door what was the matter. He hesitated a moment, then whispered:

"It's Elise and young Feltner. They want me to marry them."

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Anna went in and closed the door. "I tell your father he shouldn't do it," Mrs. Quartermain said sternly, sitting up in bed. "The idea! Waking people up in the middle of the night! They oughtn't to be married, anyway. James, you must just send them home."

"Yes, but they won't go," he said, perplexed. "They'll try to get some other minister, Elise says, if I don't do it. But they came to me first because—well, I know them, you see——"

"Came to you *first*, at this hour of the night—a pretty arrangement! Depend on it, there's something wrong," cried the moralist in the bed. "I should just send them about their business, if I were you."

Anna was equally bewildered. "It does seem very queer," she said.

But the minister, more in sympathy with the situation, smiled sadly.

"I think perhaps I should be doing a greater wrong if I sent them away," he decided finally, "so, if you please, my dear, I will dress. And I shall want you two as witnesses. I'll just go and tell them they'll have to wait ten minutes."

"And ask Elise to come to my room a minute, will you?" Anna said.

She intended to remonstrate with Elise, who, though several years older than herself, had been rather dominated by Anna's cooler head. But when the girl came in and sat down on her bed while she dressed, Anna felt suddenly that Elise had got beyond that. She looked older, somehow. She was very pale, she had a look of exaltation. So Anna said simply,

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"I am coming out to be a witness."

"Yes," Elise said.

"It's sudden, isn't it? Do your parents know?"

"No, but I am of age."

"But I thought—Has something happened? Have you arranged—I mean how are you going to live?"

"Together—that's all I know and all I care about," Elise said, with a little laugh.

"But—surely you have some plan——"

"Not one. It isn't more than half an hour since—we decided it."

"But where are you going, afterward—to-night, I mean?"

"I don't know. Wherever he takes me. What do I care? We can live somehow. I will work, too. I would sweep the streets, if it helped us to be together."

Anna was silent after that, and hurried to finish dressing. They went out into the little parlor, where young Feltner was walking about restlessly. He was a big, handsome, light-haired man, who wore his very good clothes with the air of a "swell," as Elise had been used fondly to call him. Anna shook hands with him solemnly; then Mr. Quartermain came in and they had to wait ten minutes for Mrs. Quartermain, who finally appeared frigid in a black dress and curl-papers. The young couple stood up and the ceremony proceeded.

Anna ended her letter thus:

"And they stood in just the same place that we did to be married. It did seem so strange and so forlorn somehow—that is, all except Elise. She was

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happy enough. She looked as if she was in a trance. They didn't even have a ring and I had to lend them my wedding-ring. And Elise was actually going off with it when I reminded her. Wasn't it all queer!"

A few days later she wrote that Elise and Charley were living with Elise's parents. Elise, who sewed beautifully, was embroidering things to sell, and was going to do dressmaking for anybody who would have her. And she, Anna, would like to have Elise make some cheap little dresses for her, as Elise needed some money terribly and she needed some thin clothes. It was getting warm.

Dan wrote back that of course she must have what dresses she needed, but that he would be rather short of money for a few months. He was putting everything into the mine. It would begin to pay them before long. What they needed most in that region was a smelter at Grandview. That would make their low-grade ore profitable and *that* meant millions to them. At present the ore had to be sent to Denver, and it didn't pay to haul the low-grade that far. In the spring someone would have to go to New York about the business, and that person would undoubtedly be himself. Manlove agreed that he, Dan, was the man to put through the thing. It was Dan's project. Manlove would never have thought it possible. Of course when he went to New York Anna would go with him. But meantime they would have to be careful of money.

That letter spurred Anna to an action that she had had vaguely in mind for some time. She was bent on having the summer clothes and also she wanted to help Elise—and she wanted to use her voice again.

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It had occurred to her to try for her old position at the synagogue. It was very well paid, and she remembered hearing Dan say that whoever lost by the boom, the Jews had got rich on it. And they had been sorry to lose her from the choir. In her place they had engaged a young woman, known to Anna, who had a voice fairly well trained but not at all remarkable. She and Anna had been fellow-pupils of the fashionable singing-teacher of the city for the year that Anna's salary had enabled her to take expensive lessons; and Anna had been the star pupil, always put forward at recitals, and urged by Madame Blauvelt to study for a public career. She was not afraid of Miss Hiller; but curiosity urged her to go and hear her. One Saturday morning therefore she went to the synagogue, and took a seat quietly at the back, as Daniel Devin once had done.

The thought of seeing De Ronde had not been consciously in her mind; yet she knew when he came in, rather late, in time to look up and bow as he passed her. Nor did she miss the flash of surprise and pleasure in his face. And, though she looked straight past him, after he had followed his parents and sisters up the aisle and taken his seat, she knew when he turned and looked at her.

Miss Hiller's performance was satisfactory—that is, obviously enough inferior to Anna's own. Anna went out before the sermon began, and walked slowly home. The day was bright, though it had rained heavily the day and night before, and the gutters along the main streets were rushing torrents. She enjoyed the walk, the feeling of renewed vigor, the prospect of a break in her monotonous days.

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She cared infinitely more to sing in public than in private, and her mind now was busy with reasons for doing it, which seemed to her so strong that not even Dan could object to them. Since they were poor, by his own misjudgment, he could not fairly oppose her earning some money. If Charley Feltner's wife could do dressmaking, surely *she* could use her own infinitely superior gift. So thoroughly was she convinced herself, that she intended to get the position first, if possible, and then to tell Dan about it. But how to get it? It would be rather awkward, since she knew Miss Hiller, to apply openly for it. Her thought just glanced at De Ronde—but certainly she could not say anything to him about it. In some way, however, she must let the committee know that she was available, if there should be a vacancy.

Thus occupied, she was a long time in getting home, particularly as she had to negotiate carefully each street-crossing. And she had hardly got into her bedroom and taken off her muddy boots, before her mother appeared and announced that there was a young man in the parlor to see her—"boyish-looking and dark—he didn't give his name."

Anna knew who it must be, and turned hot and cold at the idea that De Ronde perhaps thought she had gone to the synagogue to see him. But in a moment she went into the parlor, rustling with conscious dignity in her brown silk dress, and greeted him. He was wiping his brow with his faintly-scented handkerchief; he looked exceedingly warm.

"I hurried after you, as soon as I could get out," he explained quickly. "I hope you'll forgive me for coming without being asked, but I've wanted to

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do it for a long time. —I wanted to know how you are; and—to see you.”

“I’m very well—won’t you sit down?” Then Anna plunged into her explanation.

“I went this morning to hear Miss Hiller. I knew she had taken my place, and I thought I should like—to hear her.” She ended lamely, flushing as she realized that she could not tell him her reason for going. But he had guessed it.

“Could you come back?” he asked eagerly, leaning forward in his chair near her. “I hope so much that you can. Everybody felt your going as a great loss. We don’t like Miss Hiller, and I know she is only on probation and they don’t mean to engage her permanently.”

How easy it was after all!

“If that is so, I don’t see why I shouldn’t,” Anna said softly, “though of course I wouldn’t do anything to injure Miss Hiller.”

“Then may I arrange it? I mean, just a hint is all that’s necessary. The committee ought to know that it’s possible.”

Anna shook her head. “No, I can’t ask you to do anything about it——”

“But you don’t ask me. I insist on doing it.”

“Perhaps it’s hardly worth while after all,” she hesitated, “since I’m to be here so short a time. I shall go away in six weeks to join Mr. Devin. I thought it would be something to occupy me a little—I have so much time on my hands—but perhaps——”

“I’m very sorry to hear that—about your going away—very, very sorry,” said De Ronde in a low

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voice, and he looked it. "But—even a few weeks is something, for us, for—me. You won't refuse, surely."

She couldn't refuse very well; and De Ronde did arrange it, in the course of the next two weeks. Three further calls, of about an hour each, seemed to him necessary in order to keep Anna posted on the progress of the affair; at least some introductory sentences each time gave this color to his visits, and it was thus that Anna accounted for them to her mother.

Anna herself was faintly uneasy. In her environment it was hardly within the limits of propriety for a young married woman, especially if her husband were absent, to receive the regular visits of a man. And more, she knew that De Ronde admired her, had a feeling for her which was rapidly growing upon him. He had behaved with the utmost punctiliousness, so far, but now and then a word, a look, interrupting the current of their gossipy chat, gave her alarm. She liked him, she thoroughly enjoyed his visits, and rejoiced that her mother did not think it necessary to come into the parlor when he was there, except once when he had been introduced to her.

But there was too much pleasure in it, Anna felt. It was, she could not but feel, at least questionable whether she should allow him to come. And Anna could not bear to be questionable. She would prefer to be bored.

But she did not know how to convey her meaning to De Ronde. After she had resumed her place in the choir he continued to come about once a week. Then one week he came twice. And both times, by the merest chance, Elise Feltner came in—to try on

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a dress for Anna—while he was there, and after staying a few moments went away without accomplishing her errand. Elise's silence about him, when she and Anna met, was significant; it was heavy as lead. And it provoked in Anna a venomous outlash of thought that barely stopped short of speech. Elise Andrews! Elise to be setting up as a judge and daring to judge *her*! She had her own idea about Elise and about that midnight marriage. That is, it was really Dan's idea, conveyed by a careless jocular comment in one of his letters. But Anna could not be jocular about such things. With that idea in her mind she could never be really friendly again with Elise. And yet she had been kind to her; given her that work to do. And now Elise——!

No, it was not to be borne. There should be no "talk." She would dismiss him. But it wasn't easy. She was under a sort of obligation to him. Several times she began to frame the sentence, but the words wouldn't come. The days and weeks went on. She began to hope that Dan would send for her before it became necessary to do it. But it was the middle of April now, and still he was indefinite.

Slowly, and all the more surely because it grew in silence and darkness, resentment against Dan was taking form in the mind of his wife. He had left her in a very uncomfortable position; she felt its hardship the more keenly since she was obliged to give up its only alleviation. Dan had left her without protection and exposed her to gossip. And in some way she resented the ease with which he had accepted her singing again in the synagogue. As a matter of fact she had stated her wish to do it so strongly, not only

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for the money but for the occupation and interest it would give her idle days, that Dan could not refuse his consent; and it was not his way to yield grudgingly. But Anna remembered the strength with which, before they married, he had objected to her singing in public; and she thought bitterly that he had grown careless of her.

He was still in many ways a puzzle to her; a puzzle that grew less easy to solve, the more she brooded on it. They had been married but six months and for two of these they had been separated. The apparent ease with which he had adjusted himself to living without her, she felt as an injury. He was full of affection for her still—or his letters were—but they were not the letters of an unhappy man. He had left the place in which he had lived eight years without a regret for it, so far as she could see. He had broken whatever ties of friendship he had, with perfect carelessness. She who needed, to be happy or at ease, a network of other lives connected with her own, a frame of material interests surrounding her, could not comprehend the solitary spirit who apparently needed nothing except his work and his dreams of the future—dreams in which, not herself, but work again, accomplishment, success, played, she thought, the main part.

But, though she might be ill-used, Anna was resolved to be blameless. She could not write freely about De Ronde to Dan, and she disliked to feel that she was concealing anything from him—except, indeed, her thoughts of him.

Finally an event of happy augury to her family helped her to the step she felt obliged to take. Mr.

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Quartermain received a call from a prosperous Unitarian church in Oakland, with the offer of a liberal salary. A book of his sermons which had been published by subscription a year ago before and had, he thought, been as seed cast upon the rock, had now borne this surprising crop. Two or three influential members of the congregation had been first interested; lately one of them had travelled down to hear Mr. Quartermain preach, and upon his favorable report the church had acted.

There was agitation and thanksgiving in the household soon to be broken up. By the sale of their household effects and by the tardy coming in of some arrears of salary, Mr. Quartermain got enough money to tide them over the move. Anna immediately wrote the news to Dan, saying that if her own departure was to be postponed more than a fortnight she would go to a small quiet family hotel not far from her present home, until he should send for her. And when De Ronde came the next evening, Anna told him of the prospective change, saying with more show of calmness than she felt: "Of course that leaves me quite alone, and I shall have to be even more quiet than I am here. I suppose I shall live in one room and see nobody."

He started to protest, then her meaning struck him. He reddened, turned pale, and said: "You mean I am not to come any more."

"I am sorry," was all she could say. She dreaded those signs of emotion he was exhibiting—the change of color, the bitten lip. While she would not have liked it if he had taken his dismissal quite calmly, Anna much preferred that no one should have strong

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emotions, at least in her presence. She wondered if he were going to choke up and shed tears, as Dan sometimes did, and hoped not.

He got up abruptly, walked to the window and stood there with his back to her till sheer nervousness forced her to speak.

"Please don't act that way—it is absurd. We hardly know one another," she argued. "You make it harder for me——" Much to her surprise a sob, not his but hers, interrupted her.

He turned round, came swiftly back, dropped on the sofa beside her, seized her hands. "Do you mean it? Do you really mean it? Don't you care then the least bit for me?"

Anna gazed at him stonily. "No," she said with an effort.

"You do! Do you think I don't know it? You're afraid of gossip, that's all. You send me away rather than have a parcel of old women say—what could they say, after all? What have I done? Don't be a fool! Don't—send me away."

"Yes, I must. Don't speak to me in that way, either."

"I beg your pardon, but I—it's pretty sudden. A man doesn't like to be thrown overboard in that cool fashion. I thought you liked me a little—in a friendly way."

"I did."

"But not enough to outweigh a little gossip—or the chance of it? A friend doesn't mean very much to you then."

"I can't help it," said Anna, still offended. "I did like you, but my husband didn't. I couldn't

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have you come to see me while he was here, and I can't when he is gone. I couldn't even if you hadn't——"

He interrupted sullenly. "What has your husband against me? I've scarcely spoken to him."

"I don't know, but there is something."

"And are you bound by that? I thought you had separated."

Anna rose precipitately.

"It isn't true! Why should you think that? How can you say such a thing!" Her face flushed deeply. She bit her lip, and tears stood in her eyes.

"Well, when a woman as young and pretty as you are, and married only a few months, goes back to her parents——"

Again he repented the brutality of his speech and begged her forgiveness.

"But, you see, that's what people think. And I suppose I took it for granted all the more easily because I—hoped it."

He moved a step toward her and Anna retreated, lifting her head proudly.

"I can't help what people think. They have no right to say anything against me."

"No, by Jove, that's true! They haven't. You've got a cool, level head and can take care of yourself, and I admire you for it. I'm sorry for the way things have turned out. I wish we could be friends—at least. Won't you give me your hand and say good-bye?"

Anna put her hands behind her back, and looked him in the eyes resentfully.

"I won't shake hands with you. I don't think you have behaved very well. You have hurt my

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feelings, and—and—you had no right to say what you did.”

De Ronde shrugged his shoulders.

“There might be two opinions about that. You—hurt my feelings too, remember.”

“Well, that was different. I couldn’t help it.”

“Oh, yes, you could, too. You needn’t have been as cold as a stone about it. You—it wouldn’t have hurt you to be a little kinder to me. You’re a woman—why should you act like a school-girl? Why should you shut yourself up just because your husband chooses to leave you alone? You can be sure he amuses himself; why shouldn’t you? He’ll like you all the better if you don’t cry your eyes out for him. Come, I’m going now, perhaps I shan’t see you again. . . . And I’m sorry, yes, by Jove I am, in spite of the way you’ve treated me. You’re the prettiest woman in this state, Anna . . . by Jove, I’m in love with you! It hurts like sin to go away and leave you. Won’t you let me stay . . .”

“No, no!” she cried, putting out her hands to keep him off. “Go away.”

He seized her hands. “Then kiss me good-bye! You owe me that much.”

Anna broke from him by main force, and fled into her own room to weep with rage. She was sure that De Ronde’s last words had been overheard by her mother, who sat in the dining-room with her mending and newspaper. What would be thought of her? Her mother, of course, would be too scandalized to speak of it, and how could she explain? Was ever a blameless person placed in so humiliating a position before?

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And the responsibility for her humiliation in the end rested upon Dan. He had left her alone and exposed her to gossip and insult. Her pride was deeply wounded. De Ronde had said that people talked about her. And if it had not been so, if she had not been unprotected, he would never have dared. . . .

That night she wrote a letter resigning her place in the synagogue choir, and one to Dan telling him simply that she had done so. For several weeks now she had paid all her own expenses out of her salary; and Dan had not sent her any remittance for a month. But now through his fault it was out of her power to earn any more in that way; and Anna rather hoped the result would inconvenience him.

X.

MALLORY, April 20.

"MY DEAR ANNA:

"We shall build the smelter. I am organizing a company under the laws of this state, to be called the Mallory Smelter, Power, and Light Company. The company will own over sixty acres of patented land, valuable water-rights, a dam and a pipe line one and three-fourths of a mile long, from site of dam to smelter when completed. It will have an electric light plant for its own use, operated entirely by water power; seventeen and one-third cubic feet of water per second to be legally appropriated from the north and south forks of the Grandview River, at the junction of which the smelter will be situated.

"The others in the company are all business men interested in developing this section. Mr. E. T. Grand has been a mining man here for ten years. He is president of the Grand Copper Mining Company, which owns two of the richest mines about here, and president of the Grandview Town Company. I think we shall make him president of our company. The vice-president will be Mr. Powers, Secretary of State, of Wyoming; treasurer, Mr. Parker, president of the Parker Electric Light Company; assistant secretary, Mr. Green of the Green Water Works Company. I am to be the secretary, and shall have 7,500 shares of stock. par value \$10 per share.

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"The Mallory Smelter Company will own sixty per cent of the capital stock of the Parker Electric Company, which has valuable franchises in Grandview and intends to supply light and power to the town and to the mines throughout the district. Also we shall own sixty per cent of the stock of the Green Water Works Company, which has exclusive franchises for supplying Grandview with water. We estimate that the profits of our stockholders will be at least thirty per cent per annum on the value of the capital stock, including dividends from Electric Light and Water Works Companies.

"We shall capitalize the company at \$700,000, of which \$300,000 is owned by officers of company, and the rest will be sold.

"Our smelter will have a capacity of 150 tons of ore a day; the mines of this rich district now produce over 350 tons a day. Our location is in the centre of the district, with a down-hill pull from the mines. It is a great proposition.

"I am rushed every minute, but well. Have been in Cheyenne for two or three days on business about the company. We expect to sell a good deal of our stock in the East. I may telegraph you any day to meet me. Take care of yourself, dear. It won't be long now. Yours always. D. D."

MALLORY, May 3rd.

"DEAR ANNA:

"We are having beautiful weather—snow melting a little even up here, and down at River City things look springlike. This is a beautiful country—you

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will enjoy seeing it. We have finished the organization of the Mallory Smelter, Power and Light Company, and I am Secretary. Shall have a salary of \$4,000 a year when we get started, but that doesn't count much. We have a good deal of money paid in—about half enough to build the smelter. Our engineer, John Murray, is one of the best-known mechanical, hydraulic and civil engineers in the country. We shall begin work on the ground shortly; and shall have when completed a perfectly equipped plant of the most modern and expensive machinery. The ore will net us, less cost of treatment, \$5.00 per ton, and at 150 tons a day, returns from that alone will be nearly \$300,000 a year.

"We shall use charcoal for fuel. Forests of spruce and pine all about us furnish the charcoal at seven cents a bushel. Iron and lime for fluxing are abundant in this region, and our iron is of a superior quality and largely used in Denver and Omaha.

"You will enjoy the drives in summer about here. There are a good many points of interest and we can live comfortably at River City for a time. I shall not be at the mines after this spring, but shall give most of my time to the Smelter Company.

"I hope now to get away in two or three weeks. I am busy every minute, but I have time to miss you. I think of you constantly, and if I make a success here it will be for you.—DAN."

MALLORY, May 14.

"MY DEAR ANNA:

"I am glad you are comfortable in your new quarters and thankful that you keep well. I shall see

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you, if all goes well, in a fortnight or so now. We have done about all we can here for the present—at least I have—and feel that the sooner I can put the stock in the eastern market, the better for all of us; and the others agree with me. I have some letters of introduction to men in New York and Boston, and they seem to think here that I am the best person to get what we want. I came up in the stage from Ralston to River City yesterday with Mr. Grand, our president, and on the way pointed out to him that we ought to build a railroad along the route that the stage now takes—about thirty miles. He was struck with the idea and said, ‘Well, you certainly are a holy hustler before the Lord!’ He’d been in this place fifteen years, and the notion never occurred to him before!

“The valley is really lovely now. It is a farming country—everything green and the fields covered with beautiful wild-flowers. There will be a fine town at River City before many years—climate perfect, and a good many people here now. I hope you will be with me here before the end of the summer. I expect to telegraph you to meet me at Cheyenne in a couple of weeks at furthest.

“I am more certain than ever that I shall do what I want in New York or Boston. Copper is rising steadily in the market. It is just dawning on the country that copper is the base of the modern industrial development of electrical heat and power, and that all we can produce won’t supply the demand that is bound to come with a few years.

“The manufacturers and the mining world are slowly getting on to the fact that the rise in the price

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of copper is not temporary; but that, as the sources are limited and the demand inevitable, the price will go on rising steadily. Of course this is our chance and it is a big one. And this business will not only make us rich, but it will add to the permanent wealth and power of the country.

"The history of the copper industry is as interesting as a novel. It takes you out into the world, where as a matter of fact the United States has been fighting England again over it! We are forcing her manufacturers to buy from us now, as the French and Germans have been doing, since we got control of the world's markets. But those bull-headed Britishers held out—wouldn't buy from us because they thought we had simply engineered a gigantic 'corner' in copper. A Frenchman tried to do that some years ago and went broke; and the Britishers have been waiting for us to collapse, too. It does me good; I would rather lick them than anybody on earth. This is a great age and a great country. And I think we're going to make our little corner of it here count for something. The company we have organized will do a lot, but I'm more and more convinced that we've got to have the railroad.

"I'm not saying much about that here, for I rather think I'll manage to build it myself. That's what I want to go East for quite as much as the other. I'm going to have a survey made on the quiet, and get some options, and later I shall see the Union Pacific people.

"We shall make a success here anyhow, but with the railroad we would boom.

"I'm sorry to hear about Herwin. If he would

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brace up I might be able to get him a book-keeper's place out here. We shall need more men shortly. I am working like a beaver to get away—I think now by June 1st at latest I can arrange it. There has been a great deal of business to settle first in order to put things in good shape. Everything going on as well as possible.

“Keep well and cheerful, my dearest. Yours always—D. D.”

“RALSTON, June 15.

“Leaving for New York. Meet me Cheyenne via Union Pacific leaving there Thursday. Am telegraphing money. Wire me Ralston when you start.

DANIEL DEVIN.”

PART II



I.

LATE September in New York. The gasping city was submerged in a hot wave which had lasted five days without ebbing perceptibly at night—the worst weather of an uncommonly bad summer. It was smothered in a blanket of vapor, thin enough to let the sun through, thick enough to make breathing a conscious effort. In this hot humidity the outlines of buildings and of trees were hazy; the asphalt half melting was spongy to the foot, readily taking an imprint. The air was full of singed and dusty smells. The streets through which sprinkling-carts had just passed or which some cloud, faint and hardly distinguishable in the tarnished sky, had moistened with a brief tepid shower, were unrefreshed; and this moisture absorbed again seemed only to make the atmosphere more perceptible and unbearable.

Man, the sufferer by these conditions, also presented his least attractive aspect. No matter how blooming or spruce he might be normally, he could not but wither and wilt in the hot blasts reflected from stone, brick, concrete and metal. When possible he fled to some one of the oases in this desert, where a few trees, a little turf, a fountain or two, tried to create an illusion of freshness.

Central Park at half-past five in the afternoon was crowded. Every bench was occupied, the

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broader walks showed an incessant stream of people and baby-carriages. The ponds were surrounded, the boats and carrousel busy, and the drive-ways full of hired carriages. But with all this motion, there was no air of briskness; all was languid and oppressed, with perhaps the sole exception of the musical wooden horses of the carrousel. The crowd, along with this limpness, exhibited an extreme informality in dress and attitude. Men carried their hats and coats and sometimes their collars, shirt-sleeves being the prevailing note of their attire. Women wore the thinnest cotton waists or dresses, sometimes cut down a little at the throat or with elbow-sleeves. If the sleeves were long they were rolled back to the elbow, showing round arms or scrawny. Many of the girls were bare-headed, and with some of them youth and beauty, and the advantage of light, easy dress, went far to overcome the blighting influence of the weather. The innumerable babies, wearing as little as possible, lying pale and dumb or fretfully wailing, showed its worst effects.

On a bench facing the main drive-way, near the Fifth Avenue and Fifty-ninth Street entrance, Anna Devin sat, watching absently the passing show. She wore a plain black India-silk dress, her neck and arms showing faintly through the thin stuff; and a broad black straw hat. A light parasol leaned against her knee. One ungloved hand resting in her lap held a small black fan. Beside her on the seat lay a summer magazine, separating her from an Irish laborer in overalls who was peacefully smoking his pipe. Next to him was a swarthy little woman with a scarlet silk kerchief crossed on her breast, holding a sallow child

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in her arms and trying to hush its crying. The other two seats were occupied by a courting couple. His arm was frankly round her, and her head now and then touched his shoulder. The tobacco-smoke and the baby's crying annoyed Anna; she often glanced up the line of benches beyond, but a vacant seat was not to be seen; and with a weary droop, her eyes would travel back to the procession of carriages, neglecting the pedestrians between. She was rather pale, and her head, unsupported by the back of the bench, sunk a little, languidly. Her dark eyes, looking up from under the rim of her hat, rested for a brief instant on each carriage as it passed; not often was she interested enough to follow any one of them farther in its course. But now a victoria trimly appointed and containing an incongruously gorgeous woman, drew her gaze; again a four-in-hand coach, crowded with sight-seers, rolling out into Fifth Avenue with a stirring though unsteady salute from the horn. She took these, not necessarily as evidences of rank or fashion, but as some spectacular relief from the general level of unkempt humanity; much as she watched out of sight a bevy of young girls in light muslin dresses, hanging together and giggling explosively. It seemed fairly evident that no one who was not obliged to stay in town would be there; and to be obliged to do anything unpleasant was entirely outside Anna's conception of the fortunate among men. But at least the unfortunate, she thought, might have the grace to make themselves as little unpleasant in appearance as possible. Few of them, though, apparently looked at it in this light; wherever her glance turned it fell on some unshaven, per-

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spiring face; some coarse dress idly pinned and gaping in the back; some waxy-white child sucking a neglected milk-bottle—some sign of distress, of shameless poverty. And even the great breathing-place for all this cramped misshapen life—the park itself, that has such beautiful moods—could not with all its care look beautiful now. Its greens were yellowing, wasting, withering. Its guarded flowers, looked at so longingly, could not keep their freshness. The soggy air had not life enough even for them. Heavy and sluggish, it still caught up and held every evil and unclean smell. And here among rolling stretches of turf and great trees that had hardly dropped a leaf, with flowers and fountains in sight, the slow incessant stream of humanity, fainting for lack of air, poisoned what remained.

Yet here Anna had spent her afternoon. In the early hours it had not been so bad. And now that the crowd released from shops, offices, factories, was every moment increasing, she had not energy enough to go up into the heart of the park, where there might be found a comparatively empty corner. Besides, she had not time. Vaguely she thought it must be getting late, though the grayish-yellow haze concealed the whereabouts of the sun. She had no watch, but she had expected to get back to the hotel before six, as Dan, when he came back to dinner, was always hungry.

But suddenly, while there was as yet no change in the sickly light, the six o'clock whistles began to sound. First one shrill note afar in the distance, then a deeper one joining in, then a swelling chorus, still distant, but rising above the clatter of the streets;

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mounting and falling by semitones, and dying away in a long-sustained melancholy minor.

Anna had risen, pulling on her silk gloves and gathering up her small possessions. She was late, still she could not hurry; simply to move was hard enough. And, keeping to the right, it was difficult to make way through the people that were pressing in now by every entrance, to try for their breath of fresh air before night or the policeman should drive them forth. Summer evenings, however, are long in the park; policemen may be evaded and are not inexorable; and the early dawn might surprise some of these couples making for secluded nooks.

Anna walked across the plaza, whose great hotels were already flashing out their electric lights, and waited for a stage. From north and south carriages and wagons streamed through the broad square, and east and west the cars rattled along, filled with the homeward hurrying throng. The stage, when it came, had two or three empty places inside, though the seats on the roof were crowded. Anna, however, would not in any case have imperilled her dignity by an ascent of the ladder. She got in and the stage lumbered on. All the windows were open and the vehicle's motion made a little stir in the stagnant air. When Anna had paid her fare she had eighteen cents left in her purse. That morning she had given Dan the two or three dollar bills that she possessed. However, she got out at Thirty-third Street and entered the big brown-stone caravanserai—favored resting place, especially at this season, of traders and pilgrims—with the unobserving manner of one at home. She went directly up to the small inside room

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—one of the cheapest having a private bath—which she and Dan had occupied for the last month. Before that they had had a larger room, though even then they had taken most of their meals outside the hotel, and had lived by no means extravagantly, in Dan's estimation. They must have decent accommodation and food, of course; and the big hotel was a convenient business address and place of meeting for him. Therefore he had chosen to stay there, even when they were forced to economize sharply; for after all any day might see the end of their stay. Why bother to move when it was a question probably of a week or so at most? So they had stayed on from week to week.

Anna took her bath and began to dress, all the while listening vaguely for Dan's footstep. He was often late, but if he had been detained for dinner he would have telegraphed her before this. She laid out some fresh clothes for him and then threw herself on the bed to wait. The bath had refreshed her, but she still felt utterly listless and enervated. It was not only the physical terrors of the summer that oppressed her—though these gathered additional force from novelty and her experience of a possible climate. Her tonelessness was mental, too—it was the weakening of a string kept too long at high tension. The hope deferred that makes the heart sick had been hers—it seemed to her—for ages. It was not so long, in actual time—it was not long, considering what she expected to be done. And she could have waited patiently, perhaps, if a more impatient spirit had not perpetually keyed hers up. Dan's vision, overleaping the obstacles in his path, went straight to the goal;

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it foreshortened what lay near at hand and brought the distance so close that it seemed one had but to put out one's hand and grasp. He grasped it in imagination; already in his sanguine dreams he enjoyed some of the pleasures of success. The chameleon's dish afforded him at least a kind of stimulant. But a literal person with a healthy material appetite cannot make merry at a Barmecide feast. That sort of entertainment had long since palled on Anna. When now she was invited to console herself for present short commons by the prospect of plenty to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow, she revolted in dumb hunger. If she had been told to content herself as she was for a year—for two years—it would have been easier. Anything is easier than perpetual postponement. But a bright to-morrow that never comes makes to-day of no account.

Anna desired, as passionately as she could desire anything, to live to-day. It was well for Dan; he was busy; her days and her hands were empty. She was hung up in the air between the duties of earth and the rewards of heaven. She was as miserable as a bird whose nest has been destroyed and who is prevented from making another. There were no materials for nest-making in this bleak little corner of the caravanserai. Anna had almost nothing to do, even for Dan, in the long days when he was away. But she clung to that little; mended and kept his clothes in perfect order, having a sharp eye for the laundress and tailor. And when Dan had urged her to go "somewhere to the seashore" and be comfortable without him, she had refused with a passion of tears that mystified while it deeply touched him.

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Dan's imagination had its marked limits; it had never represented to him fairly Anna's state of mind.

She was homesick now—not so much for her birthplace, the memories of her disappointments there were too bitter—but for some place that might be a home. She felt lost in the great city as a grain of sand in the sea. It stunned, bewildered, crushed her. In the months of her stay this feeling only grew stronger. She had not made a friend, scarcely an acquaintance; and without these she could take no definite step toward orientating herself. She knew the principal streets by name, the shops, the park. Dan had taken her to some roof-gardens and vaudeville shows. They had a rather varied experience of the cheaper restaurants. The rest of Anna's impressions concerned the life of the hotel. She saw many things that interested and amused her; but she needed to be a part of them in some way. To be a mere spectator without any way of using her impressions—no, decidedly that was not her rôle. And in any case the seamy side of things could not interest her even as a spectator; and she knew well that she was seeing the wrong side of the city. She longed for the day when the other side—the pattern, the gloss, the glow of color, that she could guess at, though all she touched was knots and tangles and frayed ends—should be hers to enjoy. But that day—Dan's to-morrow—alas, would it ever come? She had not yet said to herself that it would not, but the suggestion of doubt was terrible enough. And doubt was strong in her to-day, for this morning Dan, needing to raise some money, had taken all his jewelry

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and her own, including both watches, "for a day or so." So they had touched rock-bottom financially. It looked as though the next thing must be a rise, but who could tell when it would come? Not Dan. He had deceived her and himself too often.

And yet faith in him was still stronger than her doubt—she could not escape the influence of his own faith in himself. If she had once looked on him as a failure, her own attitude would have been very different. As things were she was still in the attitude of waiting—but she was very weary of it.

The room had grown dark and she was slipping into a doze when she heard Dan's firm footstep down the carpeted corridor. She got up and turned on the electric lights as he came in, and a glance told her that as usual he was fagged out. He smiled at her, throwing his straw hat into a chair; but they did not speak till he had taken off his coat and his collar, which had wilted round the top. Then he drew a long breath.

"Oh, Lord, I feel like a sweep! What weather. You look cool enough, though."

"Yes, I am now," sighed Anna. "But it has been an awful day. You poor boy, you look melted."

"Worse. Don't touch me, dearest! Wow, how everything sticks! But I'll be all right in a minute or so."

He seized his clothes and a bottle of Florida water, which he liked in his bath, and shut himself into the bathroom, where a vigorous splashing soon bespoke the intensity of his relief.

Anna sat down before the bureau to brush her hair, which the humid air tended to make dull and stringy,

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and was still at it when Dan emerged, in a blue dressing-gown, and dropped on the bed.

"I've got to sleep," he said. "Wake me up in twenty minutes, will you, dear? I've asked some people to dinner at half-past seven—tell you all about it by and by."

"But who are they—tell me that!" cried Anna, bending over him.

He looked up drowsily.

"Colonel O'Beirne and his wife. Interesting people—South Americans, I think. . . . You put on that blue dress I like—will you?"

He turned, throwing up his arm to keep out the light, and was asleep in a moment. Anna stood looking at him; wishing that her hair curled as his did, lying in little segments of rings against his temples and neck still damp from the bath; wishing he would wake up and tell her more; wishing she had a new dress to wear.

But her toilette was a longer affair than his, and it was already seven by the little clock on the bureau. She returned to arrange her hair, which she now wore drawn softly back from her face in the prevailing mode, even more carefully than usual. She did not know who Colonel O'Beirne and his wife might be, but at least they were people, and people were rare. And evidently from Dan's request about the blue dress they were to dine at the hotel; that meant a good dinner, which was rare, too. But how could they afford——? She shrugged her shoulders impatiently; that was Dan's affair. And the question did not check her rising spirit. The process of getting into the blue dress did, a little. Anna had bought

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no good clothes since the honeymoon days in San Francisco. This was a winter dress, too heavy and elaborate for the present occasion. Moreover, it no longer fitted perfectly, for she was thinner than formerly. But it was a beautiful fabric and color and well-made; the lace on it was good, and it became her. Anna took courage as she contemplated her reflection, the knowledge that she looked well amply compensating for any physical discomfort. So, rather happy, she went to wake Dan.

He seemed perfectly refreshed by his nap; he was in buoyant spirits. Anna laid out his evening clothes and he dressed, talking gayly.

"I thought you might be amused to meet these people. I was. O'Beirne has been everywhere and got mixed up in something everywhere he's been. Too much of a rolling stone to get anywhere in particular, I guess, but he's a shrewd fellow, too. Wife's a jolly sort of woman. I took dinner with them a day or so ago——"

"Why didn't you tell me?" said Anna jealously. "I thought when you stayed away it was on business."

"Well, this was business. You see, it's this way. Green, one of our men, you know, knows O'Beirne, and wanted me to look him up here. Green didn't know then where O'Beirne was—said the last he heard of him he was in Chili—but he always turns up in New York about once in so often, and always stops at the Gilsey. And he knows a lot of people here. So I went round when we first came, but he wasn't there and I left a note for him. Then the other afternoon late he telephoned me that he'd just got in, and

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asked me to dinner. I didn't know he had a wife with him and of course he didn't know I had. But when I found they were pleasant people I arranged for you to meet them. Now are you satisfied, you minx?"

"Well, partly," said Anna, leaning back in her wicker chair and fanning herself languidly. "Are they at all swell people?"

"Oh, no. She was dressed very plainly. They're both middle-aged. But you needn't turn up your nose at them, Miss. They gave me a rattling good dinner, and O'Beirne has some whiskey that's forty years old."

They both burst out laughing at this.

"Much I care about his whiskey! Or you either, for that matter," Anna said scornfully. "Is he Irish? His name is."

"I guess so. I don't know where he comes from. Just now he hails from Mexico, which must be a mighty interesting country from what he says of it. And by the way I'll want to talk with him a little after dinner. You'll get on with Mrs. O.' all right, won't you?"

"I don't know," said Anna with reserve. "It depends on what she's like."

"You see, I'm off to Boston—or I expect to be—to-morrow, and O'Beirne may be gone by the time I'm back. He doesn't know how long he'll have to stay here."

"Oh," said Anna, indifferently. "Well, I hope we shall have something decent to eat to-night."

"We'll try to—for a change. Lord, I hope I'll never see one of those table-d'hôte birds again!"

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"No, let's have some real birds to-night. And some—champagne?"

"Well, champagne—well, yes, if you want it. But just wait till I get back from Boston and you shall have all you want. Anna——" he finished tying his white necktie carefully, and turned with a flash of his blue eyes—"Purcell has finally agreed to go in with us."

Anna thought she had heard something like this before.

"Has he?"

"Yes, he's agreed to it. He was to be here to-day and sign the papers, but I had a letter from him saying he was ill down at his country place somewhere near Boston, and that if he wasn't able to come on in a day or so, he'd telegraph me to come there. Confound the old rascal! He might as well have made up his mind to it a month or more ago, and saved me all this time. But it's over now—it's done now, thank heaven!"

Dan stretched out his arms with a long sigh and let them fall, looking abstractedly over Anna's head. She looked up at him with quickening though still dubious interest. It struck her again how he had grown visibly older in a few months. His hair was streaked with gray at the temples. There was a deep fold between his eyebrows, especially marked when, as now, he wore his intent, slightly frowning, look; there was a network of fine lines about his eyes, and the eyeballs often had a curious seared look. As a matter of fact, these signs of strain were due partly at least to the constant glare of sun on snow at Mal-lory; but they added ten years to his apparent age.

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Anna, however, thought him still very handsome, especially in evening dress. And he looked more important. His face was more resolute than ever—the mouth now rather grim.

It softened, though, as he became conscious of her again. He bent down to kiss her.

"I'm glad of it for your sake more than anything," he said. "Of course, I knew it was bound to come but the waiting's hard. It takes people here so long, to see a thing. They sit on their money-bags as if you were trying to *steal* something, confound them! But now—but now we can go ahead."

"What can we do now?" Anna asked vaguely.

"Why, we can go on and build the smelter. Purcell has made up his mind to put in a good deal of money. Not as much as I wanted, but—a good deal. And the next thing is the railroad! We'll go back out there as soon as I close this up."

Anna rose.

"Well, I hope it is over," she sighed. "And the next time we come to New York I hope it will be in the winter, and that we'll be able to see things—and do something."

"Of course we will," Dan assured her fondly. "Next winter."

She brushed a fleck of dust from his shoulder and looked him over approvingly.

"I don't see how you keep so well dressed," she pondered. "Your clothes are older than mine and yet you always look well."

"And don't you?" He slipped his arm round her and smiled at her in the mirror.

"Oh, no, I am way out of style. But anyhow"—

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she laughed rather sharply—"we don't look like people who have just pawned their watches to pay their board-bill, do we?"

Dan's face clouded.

"Why do you say that? I guess we'll pay our bills all right."

A knock sounded at the door—the bell-boy with a card.

II.

THE O'Beirnes struck Anna at first glance as Dan's sort of people. The Colonel was a big man with an unruly waist-line, or rather none at all; somewhat bald, with a long dark mustache, and small greenish blue eyes. He was in evening dress, but wore a very low-cut collar, leaving his stout neck quite free, and a ready-made tie; obviously a man's man and a man of business; with also a sporting flavor which Anna instantly detected and disliked. He had a frank, perfectly easy, good-humored way; as remote from the rustic as it was from Anna's idea of the manner of good society. His wife had much the same way, a little more brusque perhaps; and Anna thought her masculine. She was short, with a robust muscular figure; curly black hair flecked with grey, very fine dark eyes and a rather red face. Her dress was severely plain—a dust-colored mannish suit, well-cut, and a black straw turban. Anna at once felt overdressed and uncomfortable; and was in consequence inclined to be a little more majestic than usual. But she determined to be gracious and to enjoy the evening, if possible; and accordingly the first stiffness of her manner soon relaxed. Her surroundings helped her not a little to keep that resolution. She was glad to be once more in the big dining-room, kept tolerably cool, whose marble pillars and gilding she liked; with its shaded lights and flowers

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on the tables, the music, the pompous waiters, and the well-dressed people, of whom there were always some to look at. The O'Beirnes also were interested in the room.

"They were just finishing up this thing last time I was in town," remarked the Colonel. "It's pretty gay, hey, Flora? I wouldn't dare eat breakfast here. No, give me the old place over on Broadway. No frills there to make a pair of tramps like us feel humble. Just food—and drink—and that's about all we're used to. You can get those even down in Mexico; but as for onyx pillars with gold trimmings——"

"It's true our house has wooden posts," Mrs. O'Beirne put in briskly, "but hasn't Michael there promised me solid silver furniture when he gets the water pumped out of his silver-mine over in Sonora?"

She laughed quite loudly, and tossed off her cocktail just as the men did theirs. Anna, loathing the mixture, let hers severely alone.

"Tell me about the silver-mine," she said, no other subject presenting itself at the moment.

"Lucky for you that you asked *me* that instead of the Colonel—for I can tell you in two words, while he would talk you to death about it, if he got a chance. It's his latest, and he's chock-full of it, up to the brim. Ask your husband—he's heard."

"I have, and I want to hear more," said Dan, ordering the dinner with an occasional reference to the Colonel.

"There, you see," said that warrior equably. "(A good steak for me, Devin, there's nothing better, and Flora's the same.) I defy any man not to want to

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hear more of that mine. But as to ladies I can't speak; maybe Mrs. Devin won't be interested."

"She will," said Flora, "for I'll wager her husband's packing his trunk now—in his mind—to go down there. Ah, Michael, you've the tongue—ain't I ready to go with you myself any minute?"

"Of course you are. I can't get rid of you, I know that well enough," said the Colonel cheerfully. "Yes, whiskey—Scotch—and seltzer."

"I suppose Mrs. O'Beirne will have some champagne? Ladies prefer that, I believe——"

"Champagne, no," said the Colonel's lady. "A little good whiskey for me if you please—Scotch and seltzer, same as Michael. You see, we're both renegades, taking to Scotch; but I tell him he's the worst, for he's not only Irish, but born in Kentucky to boot."

Whiskey! Anna had never seen a woman drink whiskey. With her half-pint of Veuve Clicquot she inwardly marked the chasm of taste between Mrs. O'Beirne and herself. No, decidedly she should *not* get on with her.

"Never mind where I was born," interposed the Colonel. "I can't be President, anyhow, because I'm a Colombian citizen, so they tell me. There's a puzzle for you, Devin—but we'll get to that afterward. Go on, Flora, tell your story."

"*My* story! I disown it. It's far too grand for me. I don't even believe it—it's far too good a story to be true. Well, Mrs. Devin, the tale goes that when the bloody Spaniards held Mexico as a province the Jesuits—and though I'm a Catholic, a bad one, I don't uphold them—got from some of their Aztec converts the secret of some wonderful silver-

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mines in the northern mountains of Sonora. The man that told us the story—he was a patriot and fought with Juarez and was bitter against the Church—said that the Jesuits put out of the way the Indians that guided them to the mines, so that only they had the secret. There was a legend that prevented the Indians themselves from working the mines. The former owners had offended one of the Mexican gods, and consequently died of the plague; and there was a prophecy that whoever should have anything to do with the mines afterward would die a violent death. Well, the Jesuits worked the mines till 1820, when they were driven out and a lot of them massacred by the Apaches, the pest of that country. And the Indians held the country, though they didn't do anything with the mines, until Maximilian put his soldiers in there. Maximilian sent some Austrian engineers, who reported that the mines were enormously rich but badly wanted pumping out; and they were working to get the machinery in when Maximilian was taken and shot at Querétaro. Immediately the Apaches rose again and killed the Austrians, smashed the machinery and filled the openings of the mines up with rocks. And so they stayed till recently. Now that Mexico is getting civilized, you see, the Indians have been cleared out for good; and Colonel O'Beirne sees his chance. The mines belong to whoever discovers them now, and he's got a copy of the old map made by Maximilian's engineers. There's nothing in the world he loves better than an adventure like that—a million in the bush, with maybe a bit of fighting to get it. Isn't that right, Michael?"

"Right except the fighting, Flora," said the Colonel

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gravely. "I'm a man of peace. But if I could get away I'd go straight into those mountains all the same. Would you go along, Devin?"

"Wouldn't mind it at all," Dan said promptly. "Perhaps I'll take a vacation in the spring and come down and look you up."

"Do." "Yes, do that!" the Colonel and his wife responded in one breath. "Come and stay all summer. And bring Mrs. Devin, too, of course. It isn't half a bad country where we are."

"I hope you'll see the necessity of coming, too," Mrs. O'Beirne turned to Anna. "I don't know whether you've the same rule that I have, but I think it would be useful to you: I never let Michael go anywhere alone. I made up my mind when I married him to be an Arab—or a—what-d'ye-call-'em, those people that live in tents—a Nomad, that's it, a Nomad, and I said to him: 'Whithersoever you go, I'll go also, tent or no tent, whether it's to Kamtchatka or Peru—and don't hope to get rid of me.' That's twenty-five years ago, and if I'm not an old campaigner by this time, it's not Michael's fault—nor mine, either, for I've stuck to my word. I've been in every yellow-fever country in the world with him—somehow it's that kind he likes—and I suppose I've kept him out of more scrapes than he's got into, and that's saying a good deal. You see when it comes to a tight squeeze of any kind, Michael, if he had only himself to think about, would just go ahead. But now he has to think: There's Flora: how about the old lady? Isn't this a bit stiff for her? If he decides it is he doesn't go in; and in that case, you may depend on it, he is better *out*. I'm not a hot-

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house plant. Our last siege of yellow-fever down in Ecuador showed that. Neither of us got it, of course—we knew how to take care of ourselves, or rather I knew how to take care of myself and Michael—but people died round us like flies, our consul among others; and we were still there, and the yellow-fever, too, when the new consul arrived with his family—and he turned tail and went back to the States as fast as he could make it, and resigned. It wasn't an experience I'd like to have often. Take my advice, Mrs. Devin, and keep your husband on this continent if possible."

"He hasn't shown any signs of wanting to leave it," said Anna, smiling mechanically and a good deal bored by this loquacity. Both the O'Beirnes seemed to be unlimited talkers, she thought; the Colonel was holding forth to Dan about Mexico.

"Ah, you never can tell," Mrs. O'Beirne shook her head wisely. "With men like *them*—and I wouldn't give much for the other kind—you never know where you are or at least how long you're going to stay there. Listen to that now. To hear Michael talk about the Sonora Land Company, you'd think he hadn't another idea in his head. If he gets onto the silver-mines it's the same. Ten to one, he'll drop the Land Company and be off to the mines before many weeks—and then, next you hear of us, we'll be growing opium in China, very likely."

"And you think they're alike—my husband and yours? Why?" Anna was faintly, rather patronizingly, amused.

"Oh, they're alike. I can tell from the little I've seen of your husband that he's the adventurous

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sort, too. Only he's young, and Michael's getting old. Michael can't grind away at a hard job as he could when he was thirty; he can't stay so long in one place. And then he's had bad luck—and there's a lot in that, my dear. If you haven't luck, you may plan and work all you like, and at the end perhaps not have a house over your head. Look at Michael's Venezuelan Iron Company, for instance. He had a big concession along the bank of the Orinoco River, and had just put in a pile of money and was beginning to get some out. We'd have been millionnaires in a year or so. Along came one of their revolutions. The rebels got in and cancelled Michael's concession, and got his improvements for nothing. We lost everything. Again in Colombia. Michael had big grants of land and a subsidy promised for his railway, and was up here organizing his company and getting money to build it, when before you could say Jack Robinson! the Colombian government decided to build itself, along a route parallel to ours. There you are! And then at San Paolo——" Mrs. O'Beirne checked herself. "How I chatter! What do you care about all this! I was only trying to show you—what was it now?—oh yes, that you must have luck on your side. Michael's clever enough, nobody more so—and yet somehow he does the work and somebody else gets the benefit. Ah, well!" she sighed; and added philosophically, "We get our fun out of it."

Here she turned and interposing between Dan and the Colonel's eloquence, proceeded to give what she called "a sober idea" of the Mexican prospect. "Mr. Devin isn't going to invest anyhow, you know,

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Michael," she observed, "so why shouldn't I give him my side of it?"

"Do, and then let him come and see for himself," said the Colonel easily. "He'll find the reality a lot better than your idea of it. Women are a good deal like cats, anyhow, even the best of them," he added. "They've got to have a soft warm corner and a saucer of cream handy. Comfort—that's the main thing with them. Even Flora here, for all she talks about campaigning; she hates to rough it. That's their limitation, eh, Devin?"

Anna found herself free to study some people at the next table, whose entrance had attracted her attention a few minutes before. It was a party of two men and two women; all young, evidently on terms of gay intimacy, and belonging, from their appearance, to the world that alone interested Anna.

Of the two men, one sat with his back to their table; and the other was half concealed from her view by the taller head and shoulders of the first; but now and then when he leaned forward she got a general impression of well-groomed blondness and a jolly smile. The first man was darker and had a slow, almost drawling voice. The woman opposite him was tall, handsome, red-haired, talking more than anyone else, and looking delightfully cool in a dress of light pongee and lace and a white flowery hat. But it was the other woman who finally absorbed Anna's attention. She sat in profile, a few feet away, and her whole figure, from the light hat which curved gracefully above her brows, its flowers and stems falling over the knot of dark hair at the nape of her neck, to the hem of her long skirt trailing round the side of her

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chair, was charmingly visible. A most attractive figure it was—harmonious and exquisite to the least detail.

She was a study in browns—as obviously and successfully a study as a portrait of herself by a master would have been. Her dress, also of pongee, was the palest brown, her hat the same tint wreathed with small water-lilies, white and faintly pink, with long, shining green stems. Her hair was brown; her cheeks and hands browned by the sun. She was tall and slender; sat a good deal bending over the table, sometimes with her elbows on it; and then the line of her head and back made one long continuous beautiful line. She seemed to have no small curves, no broken lines; almost she seemed not to have a bone in her body, so lithe was she, so soft and straight and easy in motion. At least it was plain there was no artificial boning. Anna speculated and gazed wide-eyed, wondering how a woman who might be said to have no figure at all could wear her clothes in so fascinating a manner. Her small face was not beautiful exactly, though she had fine eyes. But the profile, the line of the cheek, chin, throat, and bosom, was lovely.

She was cool as a water-lily in the shade; she was like that flower, placidly swaying on a strong, flexible stem. There was a definite look of the open air about her. She might be athletic; certainly she was just up from the country. There was a suggestion of informality about her dress, like that of the other woman. At this season they were not of the city they heeded it not. Some whim perhaps had brought them into it for a few hours, but for them it was

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empty—a desert where only a million or so of people stayed who couldn't help themselves—and who didn't matter.

Anna was wistful and bitter. How jolly they were! The red-haired woman seemed to be doing the talking, in a low, gurgling voice that made it difficult to hear what she was saying—and Anna listened frankly. The others laughed almost constantly. So busy were Anna's eyes and ears with them, that her own guests were patently neglected. Finally Mrs. O'Beirne, with her shrewd twinkling glance, cried: "What is it that interests you so much? You're lost to the world!" And she turned sharply round in her chair to look.

What bad manners! Anna thought, irritated; when, rather to her amazement, the dark-haired man whose back she had been observing turned round and looked at them. The lady of the water-lilies looked, too—she had large inquisitive greenish-brown eyes, and on her bosom hung a glistening jewel with watery green and pink lights—and the other two glanced up. And to Anna's surprise the dark-haired man nodded to Dan, who acknowledged the recognition with equal carelessness. Conversation at both tables ceased for an instant, and then was resumed in lower tones.

Anna flushed. Dan knew those people, or one of them at least! And they were now discussing her party, she was sure of it. The dark-haired man murmured something in his lazy voice. She burned and palpitated. If only they had not had the O'Beirnes with them—horrid people! And Mrs. O'Beirne thought her husband and Dan were alike!

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At least they didn't look alike, Anna reflected contemptuously.

"Young Purcell," Dan said across the table to her, taking no special pains to whisper the information. He nodded toward the other table, and Anna nodded slightly to him. She did not want to discuss young Purcell now, but meant to find out about him afterward. Her thoughts circled vaguely about him and about the water-lily lady for the rest of the dinner. If young Purcell's father were really interested with Dan in a business way, she might meet him—the son. And she would like to meet him—and perhaps the others, some day.

She did meet young Purcell within an hour afterward. Her party finished dinner first—though Anna, totally uninterested in the eternal talk about Sonora and the reasons why Colonel O'Beirne didn't know whether he was a citizen of Colombia or the United States, thought they would never finish—and she followed Mrs. O'Beirne out of the dining-room, feeling the eyes of young Purcell and his friends upon her, and very stately in her self-consciousness. They sat in one of the big, almost empty rooms. Dan and Colonel O'Beirne were talking and smoking a little apart, while Anna was trying to answer Flora's questions about California, when he—young Purcell—came up and spoke to Dan. Anna had her first chance to see what he was like. He did not look young at all, she decided—older than Dan if anything. He looked more tired than anything else; his tall figure was rather sprawling and ungraceful as he leaned both hands on the back of a chair and humped his shoulders. A lock of hair hung a little

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down on his forehead; his tie had slipped a bit out of place. He smiled in a bored way, and shook hands languidly with Colonel O'Beirne—all three were standing now—and then he looked toward her, toward Anna. Dan turned, too; he was bringing him over. Anna felt herself blushing again—a detested trick of hers. But she greeted him calmly enough, introduced him to Mrs. O'Beirne, and asked him to sit down. He slid into the indicated chair, and declined the cigar that Dan offered him with a careless upward glance and smile. "No thanks; I must be going in a minute—my sister and some other people——"

His minute stretched to nearly ten. They talked about the weather and the city. Mrs. O'Beirne gave in her opinion of both, and Anna hated her for it. She discovered that he had gray eyes and a friendly smile; also, that in some way—she, rather fluttered, could not tell just how—he was interested in her. When he got up to go—his leisurely, loose-jointed motions were really awkward—he asked, "Are you going to be here long, Mrs. Devin?"

Anna, uncertain of her interpretation, said only, "I don't know—perhaps only a few days."

"I hope I may see you again?"

"I hope so," she murmured, giving him her hand.

"What long legs that young man has!" observed Flora O'Beirne. "He's terribly homely, isn't he? He moves like he was tied together with twine, and was afraid it would break."

Anna declined to smile at this sally. She watched Dan and Purcell walking together across the floor. And for the first time she felt a little dissatisfied with

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Dan's appearance. It suddenly struck her that he was too trig, too spruce, too dressed up rather. Her perceptions were exceedingly keen for the sort of thing that differentiated his general look from Purcell's. She had an immediate conviction that it was far better to look not dressed up when you wore evening clothes. Even a tie slipping out of place had its merits, looked at in this light.

Dan came back with a suggestion.

"Suppose we go up to the roof-garden? There may be a breath of air up there."

Anna wondered if the suggestion came from Purcell, and hoped they should see his party there; but she was disappointed.

There were only a few people on the roof and no one that interested her. The place itself was not interesting, either—simply some tables set under arches of evergreen, with potted palms about, and red and blue electric lights in the greenery. It was rather tawdry, and much less feeble efforts at decoration must have faded into utter insignificance, placed as they were between two great spectacles: the sky, where a thunder-storm was gathering, and the sea of roofs veiled in smoke which swirled in huge strange shapes, made visible by a myriad earthly lights.

The sullen canopy which had hidden the sky was broken up now into definite cloud forms; gray and black, towering and ragged; and a full moon lit now their fringes, now their summits, and now was hidden by some denser mass and only illuminated the gulfs of air about its edges. All was motion; below the air was stirring, and in that upper plane the clouds rose and sank, melted and formed again, in flying squad-

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rons. And now lightning began to play in them, and the first distant roll of thunder was heard.

And still nearer the earth, clouds of black and gray smoke, eddying and drifting through the glare of electric lights, echoed the drama of the upper air. But below all this action, which grew momentarily more confused and wilder, the eye found an immense solidity. Stretching away out of the reach of vision in every direction, with an impression of regularity in all its unevenness of elevation, dark or lit within by an infinity of little sparks, one huge, bare rectangular mass inexorably succeeding another, the tremendous City presented itself, overwhelming, crushing, in its expression of man's labor and achievement.

The Devins and their guests stood at the parapet for a few moments looking down, and they were all silent. Flora was the first to speak.

"It makes you feel like a bird on the wing, doesn't it?" she said, with a little shiver.

"It makes you feel that you would like to be a winner," said the Colonel meditatively.

Dan nodded.

"It looks like a hard proposition to buck up against," he said. "But people *do* break in."

"It makes you wish you belonged in it, and didn't have to break in," Anna said, half to herself.

And her thoughts went back to Purcell. *He* looked as though he belonged in it; as though he had never had to break into anything. . . .

It was true. His road had been prepared, smoothed by the work of those who had gone before. He was not one of the laborious atoms whose lives had gone into the building of those reefs of stone. The freedom

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of the city was his. Its material solidity was what he rested on. It gave him ease, a calm and lordly air of permanence.

A personality so sure of itself as his makes its mark anywhere. It appealed strongly to Anna's love of obvious superiority to circumstance, and to her instinct of conservatism. What imagination she had played about the material goods of life and made it seem to her a necessity to get them, a virtue to keep them, and the main thing to be able to make the most of them, in order to get—something else—perhaps the sort of personal distinction that young Purcell had.

She wished to see more of him. And she pondered over her brief talk with him, and especially his parting words.

Had he meant that he would come to see her?

III.

NOT only was this what he meant, but he came the next afternoon.

Dan had already started for Boston, in response to a telegram from the elder Purcell. He had given Anna money enough for several days, telling her that he might be gone that long, and that as soon as Purcell had given his check in payment for the stock he should telegraph to Grand to send him a thousand dollars on account. Then in two or three weeks they—Dan and Anna—would get off for Wyoming. Dan whistled buoyantly as he packed his suit-case. At last—at last! All the weariness of those months of waiting and working; all those days of disappointment, one upon another, when he had come back nervously exhausted after vainly hurling himself, his eloquence, his energy, against the intrenched, inert might of capital in its stronghold; that long siege, that battering of a rock harder than his copper at Mallory: all was forgotten, put behind him, in the instant of opening the telegram. He had won! Anna stood by, folding his clothes, handing him things, listening to his short, abrupt sentences, not quite understanding, distrustful of his jubilation.

“But you won’t be gone long? Not more than two or three days? I cannot bear”—a sob—“to be left here alone.”

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"Now, now, of course not! I shall undoubtedly be back by Monday or Tuesday. You know to-morrow's a half-day, and then Sunday—and I must shake up our people in Boston—oh, yes, Tuesday at latest. Cheer up, little girl, we shall have some decent weather now after this storm, and you'll feel better. I must run. Write me every day, the office address. I shall be down at Purcell's place to-night, but in Boston to-morrow."

A quick embrace, and he was gone; taking a cab to the station, for it was raining heavily.

The hot wave had broken up in a wild driving easterly storm—the equinoctial. The even gray sky, like a huge sponge suspended over the island, seemed to have sucked up all the humidity that made life a burden, and to be sending it down again in fierce streams cooled by the wind from the sea. The city shivered luxuriously in its needle-bath after a week in steam.

Anna, by no means athletic enough to enjoy a direct plunge into this elemental gambol, sat at a desk in the reading-room, writing a letter to her mother, when a bell-boy came through with the monotonous call, "Devin—Devin—card for Devin——" She had a momentary fear, as she beckoned the boy, that the caller might be Flora O'Beirne, who had parted from her the night before with the assurance that she meant to come and see her; but the size and shape of the card dispelled that idea. She had no notion, however, till she had read the name, that Purcell could really be calling on her; and if the boy had not said "for Mrs. Devin," she would have supposed Purcell must be wanting to see Dan, who had met him several times, in connection with his father's affairs.

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Not many months ago Anna would easily have accounted for the haste of any man to see her. But since she had measured her own attractions and abilities against those of women like that one with the water-lilies, she had grown a little humble. True, she still thought that she had at least the elements of success, the raw material in abundance—but she recognized that it was raw. She had thought a great deal about the water-lily lady since last night, going over in her mind every recollected detail of the other's appearance and manner, trying to imagine the process by which these had been evolved, trying to account for the effect they produced. In spite of that graceful creature's individual charm, it was as a type, a representative, that she poignantly interested Anna. Behind her was the whole world of power, of achievement, of repose in possession—that world which, in different ways, both Anna Devin and her husband felt to be set impassively against them, their aims, their desires.

Purcell, too, was of this world. That the water-lily lady was his sister Anna had instantly known when last night he had spoken of her; there was just enough resemblance to need this pointing out. Purcell knew, doubtless, many women as charming and as much of his world, who were not his sisters. What then brought him here if he had not been really struck by *her*, and she could not think he had been? Perhaps he thought her a freak from the West, something outlandish, amusing!

She gathered up the sheets of her unfinished letter, and, sending the boy back with a message to Purcell, went up to her room to get an ink-stain off her finger,

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and to make sure that her appearance was as good as, under the circumstances, it could be. Self-inspection gave her, as usual, more confidence. After all, it could not be denied that she was very handsome, and that her height gave her a certain command. And her brown silk dress, if not in the latest mode, had its good points.

Her appearance certainly interested Purcell. He liked big women, and admired solid fairness, placidity that might even be stolid. But his visit had another motive besides the impression that Anna had made on him—a motive which he admitted to himself humorously. His sister, Margaret Vaughan—energy rather than humor was her strong point—had put it thus:

“Nick, can’t we find out something about these people? I don’t doubt in the least that father will lose a lot of money.”

“Well, very likely he will. But he’s old enough to look out for himself, my dear,” Nicholas had responded indifferently.

“But don’t you care whether he is swindled or not?” protested Margaret. “You know you said that if he went into business again at his time of life he probably would be. . . .”

“Yes, he probably will be. But we can’t help it. If he wants to throw his money over the fence that’s his business. And you know nothing would make him do it quicker than the suspicion that someone was trying to interfere.”

“Yes, that’s true,” sighed Margaret. “But it would be rather amusing to find out about them, at least. You know them a little, don’t you?”

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"Oh, I've met Devin. The light-haired girl is his wife. They seem pretty crude."

"She is handsome. You might go and see her and——"

"And ask her about her husband's business? Why don't you go, Madge? You're so much abler than I——"

"Well, I didn't mean exactly that. I think I will go to see her when I get back from Marshbrook. It will be interesting to see what I can find out."

Nicholas laughed. "I'll warn her that you're coming," he said. "Indefatigable Madge! You won't rest till you have the whole story of her life."

"It would be easy for you to get it," Margaret said. "I wish people confided in me half as much as they do in you."

"They would, probably, if you weren't so much interested," said Nicholas idly.

In fact he was used to confidences, being more disinterested, though certainly no less interested than, for example, Margaret. It was that quality of his interest in life—a little detached, yet sympathetic, intelligent, and above all kindly—that attached to him many very different people—those who could give him nothing except affection, as well as those who enlarged his experience. Experience, as expressed in personal relationships, was really what he cared for in life. But his interest had an unusual scope. It recognized the æsthetic value of externals, it appreciated beauty in any form, whether of nature or art; but it was deepest in the most elemental things, in the simple, the universal emotions on which life rests.

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Early ill-health had given him a philosophic turn, had predisposed him to reflection rather than action, and made him nervously more impressionable, more receptive. He was a man of practically no prejudices, but of definite dislikes. And one of the things which he disliked most was the attitude of caring for money, actively seeking it or worrying about it.

He could see no compensating advantage in the necessity of earning one's daily bread; to his imagination, it was a more attractive mode of life to beg it, or even to steal it. He himself had always had rather more than enough; but he was convinced that it would be infinitely easier to reduce his needs to the vanishing point than to try to increase his means. This, however, was but theory, and it was not likely ever to be proven whether he could give up the present conditions of his life—independence, freedom, and ease. His few thousands a year in rents, left him by his mother, were safe, unless a tidal wave, or an earthquake, or her own mass, should sink New York in the ocean. And for himself Nicholas wanted nothing more.

The prospect of his father's millions was by no means so sure, and Nicholas was rather disposed to exaggerate its unsureness. His pride in any case would have refused to take explicit account of that prospect; and he found a certain relief in dismissing it altogether, in putting before Margaret the strong probability that their father would either in his crabbed old age dissipate the fortune he had painfully amassed; or would leave it to charity, or perhaps even marry again.

Margaret Vaughan rebelled strongly against this

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view of it. To her their inheritance was an actual possession, and it was theirs by right. She considered that her father had no right to deprive them of it, and that, since his judgment was very likely now impaired by age, it was their business to prevent him from doing a wrong. Margaret cared frankly for money, and wanted a great deal more than she had; she was now maintaining an expensive establishment and a second husband who had a love for sport. From her first husband she had been divorced, after four years of married life, and had married the second a month afterward. Her present object in life was the happiness of George Vaughan, and George was rather extravagant.

Nicholas was very fond of his sister. The unhappiness of her first marriage had been a source of melancholy to him as poignant as his father's disappointment in them both. Now that Madge, poor girl, was getting some enjoyment out of life, Nicholas was correspondingly relieved. He would have done a good deal for Madge that he wouldn't do for himself.

And since the event that he had often predicted to her now seemed in a fair way of coming to pass, Nicholas could not but be interested, on her account and his father's, if not his own. Josiah Purcell was about to invest a good deal of money—Nicholas did not know exactly how much—in a scheme which might be fraudulent and would doubtless be a failure. He was investing practically on the word of Daniel Devin, whose eagerness, eloquence and absorption in his business were all rather against him, with Nicholas. Nicholas, on the two or three occasions when they had met, had thought him rather too talk-

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ative, too plausible, too enthusiastic. He did not readily see how a man could put so much temperament into a matter of dollars and cents unless he were presenting a proposition that needed gilding. To be sure, Devin had been talking to his father, not to him, and allowance must be made for the fact that Nicholas was bored. Yet he confessed to a definite impression made by Devin; and now to one, equally definite and less doubtful, of Mrs. Devin. She was extremely handsome, there could be no doubt of that. And she was young, and in some way unhappy. That was enough to a man interested in women. Altogether Nicholas felt he had reason to stay over another day in town, though he had intended to go back to Lenox with Bella Buccleugh and her husband.

It was with a charitable eye, though one not wholly single to her personality, that Nicholas studied Anna. He thought it very likely she might be the wife of an adventurer; very likely that her lack of ease, her air of repression, might be due as much to a sense of a false position as to her inexperience. For there was nothing of the adventuress about her. With all her stiffness and reserve she was somehow as simple and forlorn as a lost child.

She confessed to him indeed that she felt rather lost in New York—that she found the city “terrible”; and, immediately alarmed at having shown feeling, added: “I mean, it is so big and so much like a machine. It’s too big to stop. It keeps on grinding, and you see people all the time being ground up in it—or so it seemed to me. I never saw so many miserable people in my life as I’ve seen this summer.”

Purcell was sympathetic. He had never been

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close enough to the ground himself to feel that jarring of the machinery, that vague fear that one's self might be caught and crushed in it—but as to miserable people, yes, he knew what she must have seen.

"Oh, the summer—yes, it is terrible. All those poor wretches swarming into the parks and streets—and not caring how uncomfortable they make us by the sight of them!" Again Anna felt the kindness of his smile, the personal glance that seemed to appreciate in friendly fashion herself, her words, looks, feelings.

"Yes, and this is the reason, I think, why New York seems terrible to me—that it seems like a place meant only for rich people, that only the rich can enjoy—and yet almost all I have seen in it are poor." Anna was pleased at having thought this out so definitely, and went on, expanding a little: "I think it must be the worst place in the world for poor people. Why, where I come from they can breathe in comfort, at least! They can live out-doors, without dropping dead or fainting from the heat, as I've seen people do here. I wonder why they all stay here."

"They have to, I suppose—they work here, or they're dependent on those that do."

"Yes," said Anna, coloring a little and remembering her own summer.

"But it is over now, the sort of misery you've seen," Purcell went on quickly. "You'll see the city now in a better mood—waking up, beginning to live and enjoy itself. That is, if you're to be here into October—I hope you are."

"I don't know—probably not. It depends on Mr. Devin's business."

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"You'll be glad of that, I suppose? Getting back to your home, I mean."

"Oh—I don't know," Anna looked blank. "You see, we're not going back to California, and that's all the place I know really."

"Oh, I thought——"

"Mr. Devin's business is in Wyoming now. He is interested in copper-mining there—as I suppose you know."

Purcell smiled amiably. "Yes, I'd heard something of it. I met Mr. Devin two or three times, in my father's office, and they were talking business—but I can't lay claim to any very definite ideas on the subject either of copper-mining or of Wyoming. Is it a wild country?"

"Oh, I don't think so—except the climate. I've never been there, you see."

"Oh, really!" Purcell was genuinely surprised, and interested in straightening this out. Where *had* she been, then, he wondered. She couldn't be over twenty, and couldn't have been married long. And he had an idea that Devin had been mining copper for years.

"No, Mr. Devin thought the winter too severe for me. At Mallory, where he has been, the snow is fifteen and twenty feet deep almost all the year. It was just melted off when he left in June, and has already begun again."

"That sounds rather Arctic." Purcell was not going to try to pump Anna about her husband or his business. It was the personal side of her marriage that his questions concerned. "Shall you like going into it?"

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"I don't know," she said again. "But we shall not be at Mallory. That's on top of the mountain, and in the valley there's a town, River City, where we shall live, I suppose."

The prospect certainly roused no enthusiasm in her. When her face was not animated, when her heavy eyelids drooped, she looked melancholy. And she was not the melancholy type. Her face, he thought, was made to express content, well-being. Now there was a touch of sullenness in its naive dissatisfaction.

Anna almost instantly became conscious of that look, and controlled herself. Purcell's questions had forced her to think of her immediate prospects, and so to betray how little she liked them; and yet she was glad he had put them, for after all, what else could they have talked about? She did not feel equal to asking questions about *him*. But she was flattered by his apparent interest in her.

"River City, you know," she went on hurriedly, "is where they're going to build the smelter."

"Oh, I suppose I know what a smelter is. But tell me, what shall you do at River City?"

"Well, I can hardly tell till I get there." She laughed at that, and he thought her very attractive. "I shall have a house, I suppose. And a piano, though I suppose no chance really to study there. Naturally there wouldn't be any good teacher in a little village like that. I shall have to go on by myself."

Here was something positive, at last. He had begun to think she was all negations.

"That's something you care a great deal for—music?"

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"Oh, yes!" Anna spoke with all her natural energy and impulsiveness. "I was studying for the concert stage when I was married. I had sung in church choirs for two years. I had a good teacher in Los Angeles, and she was very ambitious for me. I am eager to go on. It has really been the worst part of the summer here that I couldn't have a piano. There wasn't room. And we were expecting to go from day to day——"

She checked herself, rather aghast. Why was she telling such things to a man with whom she was talking really for the first time? How, in spite of his quiet, attentive face and observant manner, could he care to hear them? He was probably bored.

But he was nothing of the sort. A woman to interest him need not be clever; she need only be genuine and frank, and she was sure to have something to tell him. His intimacies, and all his friendships, too, were intimate, had been mainly in the two strata—the top and the bottom—where genuineness and frankness are in demand and frequent. Anna he judged to belong, by training at least, to the between, the middle class; which is too much absorbed in the struggle with material things to cultivate its emotions, and too much bound by convention to confess them freely. But he judged her also to be genuine, and thought she would be frank, if she had not some outside reason for trying to hold her tongue.

In spite of her stately figure and some signs of experience in her face, she still had a certain child-like quality. And she had the bloom and freshness of a child. As she sat facing the window—Purcell, on the tufted window-seat, had his back to the gray pane

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streaming with water, which blurred out the Avenue from view—he thought he had never seen a face which needed less to be managed. She was one of those women whose honest robust beauty is a constant quantity. Purcell much preferred that kind, as opposed to the gaslight beauty, which is there in a favoring light and air even bewilderingly, and gone like a spell dissolved in the gray morning. And she blushed, too, charmingly—with a completeness and helplessness that was appealing.

“I wish I could hear you sing,” he said—at random, for he didn’t wish it, music being one thing in which he had no love for the amateur. “But at least there’s one thing that may bring you back to New York some day. I suppose New York’s the half-way station on the road to Europe, for the student, isn’t it?”

“Oh, I think I should be satisfied with New York!” said Anna fervently. “If I could have a whole winter here, to study with a really good teacher——” something like a gasp of longing gave her pause.

“Well, I suppose you will have it, since you evidently want it very much,” Purcell said softly, and not without an obscure intent that had a certain malice, toward Devin, in it. “People are apt to get what they determine to get, I think.”

“Oh, do you think so?” She gazed at him intently, rather sombrely. “I don’t. People may determine to do things and fail.” She was thinking now of Dan.

“Yes, they may. But if they have will enough—and strength enough to assert themselves—and are willing to make sacrifices—I think success is pretty sure.”

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Anna looked absently over his shoulder at the window and the torrent flung against it by the wind.

"Yes, if they make sacrifices," she murmured. "But supposing they sacrifice somebody beside themselves——" she looked a bitter question.

"The end may be worth it," Purcell said meditatively. "I suppose each of us has to judge of that, at one time or another. And then—one can't always be sure that what seems like sacrificing somebody else isn't the best thing for them—for the somebody else, I mean."

"No," said Anna, adapting this sophistry, "just as you can't be sure that what seems the best thing for somebody else isn't sacrificing them."

She was not trying to be clever—she was being autobiographic!—Purcell said to himself as he watched her downcast face. But again she made a visible effort over herself.

"I watched your sister last night," she said. "At least I suppose it was your sister—the one with dark hair. How beautiful she is!"

"Beautiful? She isn't thought so, generally—though she does make her impression, whatever you name it."

"Oh, I call her beautiful. I was quite fascinated. I stared at her all through dinner!"

"She was interested in you. She spoke last night about wanting to meet you. Perhaps when she comes through again——"

"Oh, I should like it very much—if we're here——" said Anna rather oppressed.

"She's gone down to Marshbrook to-day, to be with my father," Purcell went on. "He's been a little bit

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ill for a few days, and whenever he's that way he wants one of us with him. He likes to have my sister look after him at home, and to have me around when he has any business—that's the way I happened to meet your husband. At other times, though, he gladly dispenses with us. At his age, you know, people begin to want to be independent."

"Then I suppose Mr. Devin and your sister will meet." Anna was struck by this. "For he has gone down there to-day. Your father telegraphed for him."

Nicholas was struck too.

"Has he really? Then they will, no doubt."

"Yes, for Mr. Devin was to stay overnight there."

"Ah, I hope he'll be comfortable," said Purcell.

"My sister hates the place—all marshes and midges. Now and then she threatens to burn the old house down—it's been in the family for ages, and my father was born there, so he clings to it—and Madge says he evidently intends she shall die there."

Then he rose with a fair show of reluctance.

"I've got to go up to Lenox for a day or so, to look after some guests of Madge's till she gets back," he said. "But may I try and find you again after that?"

"I hope you will. But we may go at any time. I suppose I shall know when Mr. Devin gets back Tuesday." She gave him her hand, and a regretful look.

"I hope you won't go. At least till I've seen you again." Nicholas meant that speech with a whimsical completeness. He hoped that Devin would not immediately get what he wanted to get from his father, and so—since his going evidently hinged on that transaction—that he would not be able to carry off this handsome girl into the wilds of Wyoming.

IV.

DAN reached Marshbrook and The Homestead in time for a late dinner. A closed carriage met him at the station, from which Mr. Purcell's place was distant about half a mile. Dan could not make out much of the village, through which he was driven rapidly, except that it seemed to consist of a few stores near the station and of a straggling line of low houses, each in its fenced yard, on the side of the road which curved round the shore of a little bay or cove. It was still raining, though not like the deluge in which he had left New York, but the wind was stronger. It rushed in, fresh and salt, straight off the sea, and drove the rain obliquely before it, blurring the carriage window on that side, so that he could only guess at the outlines of house, tree and shore. But he heard the wash of little waves on a pebbly beach, and farther off the roar of a long surf. Soon he had passed the little beach, and then the swishing of reeds moved by the wind above and the water below accompanied him the rest of the way, except for one stretch, where on a kind of low plateau a group of pine-trees grew. The road ran beneath the pines, whose perpetual note was deepened to an echo of the surf, then branched off to the right, and followed the bank of an inlet which was half marsh. At the end of this inlet stood The Homestead, so named by Josiah Purcell's long-dead wife.

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Its long, low, irregular front looked gloomy enough to Dan, for the shutters of all the eastern windows were closed against the storm. But once inside, the impression was very different. The big square hall, belonging to the main new part built on by Mrs. Purcell, was in fact the most cheerful spot in the house, at least when a fire burned, as now, in the enormous fireplace at the back which held six-foot logs with ease. The dark polished floor and wainscoting, and surfaces of the high-backed seats on either side, as well as the brass of the tall andirons and of the candlesticks on the narrow shelf above the wainscoting, reflected the blaze so as to fill the hall with a red glow, dazzling to one entering from the dark.

A grave butler had opened the door, and a man in livery was at the step, as the carriage drove up, to take Dan's suit-case. In the hall Dan was relieved of his hat and overcoat, and was led up immediately to a bedroom on the second floor.

"Mrs. Vaughan told me to say, sir, that dinner will be served as soon as you are ready," the man murmured.

"All right—I'll be down in a minute," Dan said.

He threw off his coat, and looking about the large, low-ceiled room, saw that a curtained doorway led to a dressing-room. It had not occurred to him to bring his evening-clothes, nor did it now that they were called for. When he emerged, he found that everything he had brought had been unpacked and neatly disposed of, and that his coat had been brushed and hung on a chair; and he was further relieved to find, also, that his attendant had vanished. The quaint old-fashioned air of the room struck Dan agreeably,

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as he took it in while brushing his hair. The wood-work was all white. There was a huge four-poster bed of mahogany carved all over, and the other furniture was in corresponding odd shapes. A fire burned in a grate, and over the mantel-piece hung three miniatures in oval black frames. This room too was lit by candles, in old silver holders. Dan's toilet consumed not more than ten minutes. Mechanically he felt for his watch, when he was dressed, and was rather irritated in remembering the reason of its absence. But the tall grandfather's clock in one corner of the hall told him the time as he descended. It was chiming eight. Dan had snatched a buffet meal in Boston, but he was now perfectly ready for another. He was ready also to confront Mrs. Vaughan, though he had no idea who she might be. And when the lady, who was leaning against the back of one of the settles and looking into the fire, came forward to greet him, Dan had no recollection of having seen her before. He had noticed her the night before at dinner, but then she wore a hat and now she was without one, and also she was not the type that impressed Dan. He now thought her very pretty, however. She wore a long white ruffled dress, cut square a little below the throat, and with sleeves to the elbow. About her throat was a black velvet ribbon with a gold locket, and she had heavy gold bracelets on her wrists. Her hair was massed low in a thick knot. If Dan had been more learned, he might have thought she had got herself up to match the house. As it was, his eyes simply did homage to her as a charming woman. And evidently she meant to be charming to him.

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"I'm so sorry my father isn't able to welcome you himself, and he is sorry," she said, smiling at Dan—their eyes were on a level—as she gave him her hand. "But I've persuaded him to stay in bed till to-morrow, when we think he'll be all right. Probably, though, he would have come down in spite of me, except that he is so hoarse he can't speak."

Her manner indicated that this illness might be taken very lightly, and accordingly Dan only said, "I'm sorry. But you're quite right not to let him get up."

"Then, if you'll resign yourself to dining alone with me—I should think you must want something after your journey."

"I shan't mind it," Dan said with his frank laugh.

The butler appeared at one of the four square doorways opening into the hall and announced dinner, and Dan and the lady walked side by side into another large square room, all dark polished wood and dark tapestry. The inevitable fire glowed here under a chimney-piece reaching to the ceiling. Opposite, a mahogany sideboard, towering up nearly as high, was covered with silver pieces, each of which reflected in miniature the whole room with the flame at the heart of it. Cupboards and cabinets in the obscurer corners sent out occasional gleams, and the round table with its nasturtiums and yellow candle-shades and its two places laid near one another, looked oddly isolated and intimate in the centre of the broad floor.

"I saw you last night," Mrs. Vaughan began, as they sat down. "We were at the next table at din-

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ner, don't you remember? And we all fell in love with your wife. She is beautiful, isn't she?"

"I think she is," Dan admitted. "But she tells me I'm not much of a judge. She fell in love, as you call it, with you too."

"Then we ought certainly to meet some day," said Mrs. Vaughan, laughing. (Honest man, she reflected, he told his wife how much handsomer she is than I, and she talked clothes to him.) "Are you going to keep her in New York much longer?"

"I hope not, this time. I'm very anxious to get back to Wyoming. But she has made me promise her a winter in New York as soon as we can manage it. I hope it will be soon, on her account."

"She likes the East, then?"

"Well, she thinks she would like to live here eventually. She wants to study music. She has a very fine voice, and she thinks there are no facilities in the West for cultivating it."

"Oh, she sings too! Well, she is right, I suppose, about studying here. But tell me more about her. Is she a type of the Wyoming women?"

"Wyoming? She never saw it, except from a car-window. She's a Californian—never was out of her native State till this trip East."

"Oh, I didn't know you had lived in California."

She appeared wonderfully interested, Dan thought, in his wife, himself, and his doings. Her large, clear, greenish eyes were fastened on him inquisitively. She leaned a little toward him, her head bent, in an attitude of keen attention. In willing to express her interest, she was overacting it a little, and Dan was slightly puzzled. However, he responded; he could

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not well help it; and prompted by her frequent questions, he found himself telling her something about California, and a good deal about Wyoming. Once set going on the subject that occupied his mind, he talked freely. He ceased to notice Mrs. Vaughan's posing, and presently, as she was really struck by what he was saying, she ceased to pose, sat upright and quiet, and simply listened. The dinner was very good and rather long; but Dan, always abstemious, early ceased to think about what he was eating, and his glass of claret, which he had half filled with water, stood untouched until, with a large gesture intended to indicate the sweep of country comprehended in his project, he knocked it off on the floor. This accident gave him only an instant's pause. Fortunately Mrs. Vaughan's dress swept out its transparent white frills on the other side of her chair, and so escaped; and after assuring himself of this, Dan went on.

The mines and their prospects; the certainty that they would pay when the smelter was built; the certainty that the thing would be a bonanza if the railroad was built: Dan had gone over this field so often, had so often displayed its every detail to an auditor lukewarm or cold, covertly or openly sceptical, that now he could only be moved to do it again by either a definite practical prospect, or by the quality of personal sympathy which a feminine listener is more apt to have. Margaret Vaughan was very good at pretending to be interested in people, and as a matter of fact her casual interest was diffused over a remarkably wide superficies; but she could not simulate sympathy, and she had it for very few people or things. Dan somehow had managed to stir some real feeling

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in her. He was a new type, and so mildly exciting; but by the time he had begun to make a map of the Grand River valley, so that she could understand just why and where the railroad should go in, she was sure she liked him. Margaret Vaughan herself had a surplus of energy which she was generally at a loss to invest; the love of action was deep in her; it was generally activity of one sort or another that interested her; and she mainly respected only accomplishment, tangible success. Dan impressed her as the sort of man who does things; and this daughter of a shrewd and hardworking sire felt a sudden admiration for the new man's virile strength and ardor.

Dan was quick to respond, and he talked as he had never in his life talked to Anna, whose eyes indeed had never dwelt on his with this comprehending, intense, intimate gaze of Mrs. Vaughan's. He had impounded her sherry, claret, and water glasses as well as his own, and two small silver dishes containing salt-nuts and candied fruit, to indicate the mountains round River City. It took all the forks and spoons remaining on the table to mark the course of the river and of the stage-line from Ralston. And perceiving Dan at a loss for some further object, Mrs. Vaughan slid off one of her bracelets and handed it to him.

"That's a good omen," he said; "River City is marked with gold! Now by rights, since the stage-line is silver, I should have gold to mark the railroad. But never mind, you must imagine it. It should run parallel to this line, and when it gets into River City gold and silver will be common there. And it's bound to come. With a gold and copper country like that waiting to be tapped, the Union Pacific will build it

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themselves in the course of a few years, if we don't. But we're going to."

He leaned back in his chair and looked at her triumphantly; and the butler, who had been hovering near for twenty minutes, approached in another attempt to place the salad plates. A glance from Mrs. Vaughan stopped him. She did not want Dan's map disturbed; the earnestness with which he regarded it was interesting her much more than the rest of the dinner.

"How you care about it all!" she exclaimed. "You simply devote yourself to it, don't you?"

"Well, why shouldn't I? I expect to make my fortune out of it, you know. And, besides, it's a good enough thing to devote yourself to."

"And after you've made your fortune, what then? What shall you do with it?"

"Oh, as to spending it, you mean? I suppose my wife will attend to that. That's the women's business, you know!"

"You mean it's all they can do, don't you? Well, perhaps so. But surely you must have some idea of spending, yourself. Isn't there something you want a lot? A yacht—a racing-stable—a big establishment——"

Dan shook his head. "None of those. I'd want to have some horses, but mainly to drive myself. I'd like a comfortable house—good living. As for the rest, it would be Anna's lookout."

"So you're really making it for her," said Mrs. Vaughan meditatively. "She cares for a lot of money?"

"Oh, she likes it. You all do, don't you? And—

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yes, I suppose I am making it for her. But that's not saying that I'm not pleasing myself, too."

"I see. But it's really the making of it that *you* like."

"I guess it is—mainly."

"Then when you've made your fortune—your pile, they say out there, don't they?—you'll just put it into something bigger?"

"I shouldn't wonder if you're right. And I'll tell you about something that may or may not be bigger, but I'd look into it right off if I were free—it's rather a long story. Would you like to hear it?"

"Indeed I should. And wouldn't you like to smoke? I like a cigarette sometimes with salad."

The dinner proceeded. Dan did not care about smoking; his cigarette went out and he laid it down to eat his salad. But Mrs. Vaughan kept hers and smoked that and another while he was telling her the story of the lost silver-mines. Dan rambled a bit at first. He had never before seen a lady smoke. He had in fact a theory that no lady would smoke. He was a good deal jarred—and perhaps this showed how kindly he had begun to feel toward her. She did not attract him sensuously, and yet he liked her as a woman. He felt that if he knew her better he should request her, as gently as possible, not to mar thus the feminine sweetness of her looks—but that was now out of the question. He collected his thoughts and went on with the story, telling it concisely, briefly, and leaving the picturesque outline to speak for itself.

"That's one of the romances of money-making, isn't it?" she said when he had done. "But do you

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think there's anything practical in it? I mean, even if the mines were found, could they be worked now?"

"Why not? Only it would take a lot of money. You see, the Indians, or some say the Austrians, when they found they couldn't hold the mine, smashed the machinery—and it would have to be replaced. You can't start any big thing, you see, without a good push, and it's money that gives that. Here in the East you've got most of the money. Out West we've got most of the big things. It usually takes two kinds of men to make a thing go—one to discover it, and do all the hard work, and one to put up the money. Now which do you think deserves the biggest share of the profits?"

"Why, I should think the discoverer," said Mrs. Vaughan.

"Well, perhaps so. But he doesn't get it. The capitalist gets the lion's share. Look at Columbus! He discovered America, but the King of Spain—that is to say, the fellow who staked Columbus—got the country, didn't he?"

"I dare say he did."

With a laugh at this their dinner ended. They went into the library, which was in the old part of the house, and talked a little longer while Dan smoked half a cigar. Then Mrs. Vaughan rose.

"It isn't ten yet, but you've had a good bit of travelling to-day, and I'm sure you're tired," she said. "Now I've something to suggest for the morning. My father won't be ready for this business conference before ten o'clock, when I believe his lawyer gets here, and he'll probably want to rest till then. So

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supposing you come for a sail with me? I go out every good morning when I'm here—it's the only thing there is to do. And I rather think this storm is going to blow over and give us a piping breeze. Are you a good sailor?"

"I shouldn't wonder, though I never tried—as the man said when he was asked if he could play the fiddle."

"Well, if you've never tried——! It's apt to be pretty rough. You mightn't like it."

"If you can stand it, I ought to be able to," said Dan. "I'm not going to be bluffed out that way, anyhow."

"Very well, then—eight o'clock breakfast. You'll be called at half after seven."

She walked back to the hall with him, gave him a lighted candle, and said good-night to him at the foot of the stairs. And following a few moments later, she heard, as she passed his door, which was a little open, a shout of laughter, instantly checked. She wondered for a minute but never knew its cause—the sight of his bed, opened for him, with his pyjamas neatly laid out on the foot. If this struck Dan as rather an excessive refinement of hospitality, it was only a momentarily comical aspect of what characterized the whole time of his stay. He was thoroughly well taken care of, and instead of a business errand was made to feel that he had come as a welcome guest. Of course it was Mrs. Vaughan who gave the surprising social aspect to his visit. That elaborate little dinner tête-à-tête with a pretty woman, and the early morning excursion—nothing could have been farther from Dan's expectation. But he felt the re-

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lief that this little interval gave both to mind and body—he was grateful to her. After the sweltering heat of the last few weeks, the noise of the city perpetually, insidiously wearing on his unaccustomed nerves, the tedium of the railway journey; the cool quiet of his room with even the sound of wind and rain subdued—for it was at the back of the house—made Dan sleep soundly till he was roused in the morning. As Mrs. Vaughan predicted, the storm had blown over. He looked from his windows on the blue of a cloudless sky, reflected in innumerable little pools of ultramarine among the yellowish green reeds; on the darker surface of the inlet, crisped by the wind; the roofs of the village beyond over the pines and old apple-trees; and a boat riding at the little pier a stone's throw from him.

As for the sail, it was an experience. The boat was rather large; with a man to manage the canvas and Mrs. Vaughan at the tiller, Dan had plenty of room to range about, if he so desired. With the tide just turned and running their way they slipped easily out into the bay and then had to tack out against the wind.

“Do you want to go outside?” the man asked. He was not a servant, but a villager, and he addressed Mrs. Vaughan with a little more brusqueness, perhaps, than he would have used to his own womankind. He was in fact one of the old residents of Marshbrook, where to be an old resident means that your family have lived there a hundred years. The residents of Marshbrook had all known Josiah Purcell as a boy and an equal, and he was still to them an equal and “Josiah.” The villagers were rather proud of Josiah,

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but prouder still of their ability to address him by his first name, to patronize his children and snub his English servants.

"Of course," said the lady briefly. In her rough dark suit and white sweater, with her head bare, she looked less pretty than on the night before; Dan could see that she was a good deal freckled, and, with her hair blown back from her forehead, she also looked older. But her physical strength and vigor were more in evidence; and the swaying of her lithe figure, the ease with which she managed the tiller, and her enjoyment of it all, were attractive enough.

"You'll get pretty wet," said the man.

"Never mind, skipper. I've been wet before, haven't I? If *you* don't mind a little spray——" she turned to Dan.

"Oh, no," he said, sitting tight on the upper side of the boat. "Look out for your head!" roared the skipper. Dan ducked into the bottom, while the boom swung across and the boat turned round. They were passing now between the two curving points of land that enclosed the little bay, and already met the swell of the sea. Some distance out a long strip of rocky land extended about a mile parallel to the shore, and intercepted the full force of the breakers. On this dashed the surf which Dan had heard, and he saw it now leaping high into the air in foam. But even inside the breakwater the waves were crested with white, and as the boat breasted them in her oblique course she flung the spray backward in sheets. Dan, wrapped in a mackintosh which had been disinterred from the cabin, had his face and hair drenched, and could taste the salt blown against his lips.

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"Can you swim?" shouted Mrs. Vaughan, smiling mischievously.

"Not a stroke," he returned, keeping a calm front, though he could not help watching the boat's rail awash and the green wall of water towering up beyond. He was conscious of some inward qualms, but also of enjoying the thing; and though they did ship a good deal of water and though there were one or two moments when even the skipper and the lady seemed a bit tense, he was never really alarmed. Still the keenest enjoyment came perhaps when it was over and he could realize to the full how he had been exhilarated and refreshed. Mrs. Vaughan bade him good-by when they returned to the house. Business and a sort of sentiment were mingled in that farewell.

"Put me down for a hundred shares of your stock, will you? I want to feel that I have a little part in your success," she said, looking at him with the odd mixture of manly frankness and feminine insinuation that characterized her. Margaret indeed was by turns a good fellow and a simple expression of her sex. In either aspect she was attractive, stimulating. Dan thanked her warmly "for everything."

He went into the business interview, which took place in the library, between Mr. Purcell, the lawyer, Mr. Andett, and himself, with a greater vigor, energy and mental clearness than he had known in months.

Josiah Purcell was a small man, made smaller by a pronounced stoop of the shoulders, but wiry and crabbed in look. His hair and short beard were white, his complexion ruddy, his gray eyes quick and full of temper. He was carefully dressed and certainly did not suggest the invalid, though he was still

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hoarse. Mr. Andett was an odd contrast—an unusually tall man, with a long, very gentle, melancholy face, a subdued manner and voice, large, grave eyes.

All the preliminaries had been arranged at previous meetings, and this one was simply to sign certain final papers, copies of which both Dan and Mr. Andett had brought. Josiah Purcell's naive vanity was gratified by bringing Dan from New York and Andett, a busy man, from Boston, to suit his own convenience, and by the feeling that both were to a certain extent dependent on his will. Andett he paid a large yearly salary to look after his interests and conduct his incessant litigation. Daniel Devin he regarded as a man who was to be made by his, Purcell's, money. True, he considered it certain that he, Purcell, was going to make a good deal out of Daniel Devin's scheme; but he preferred to lay the emphasis on what Devin was about to receive from him.

His aspect this morning was slightly defiant. Andett on general principles had advised him against the new project; and he had taken this advice as something of an affront to his own business acumen. The attitude of his children toward his engaging in any further business acted as a still stronger irritant and spur. Ten years before, Josiah Purcell had formally retired from business, and had started for a European tour; never having been abroad except for a trip round the world taken for the sake of his health when he was a very young man. He had got as far, this time, as Paris, then turned round and came back, and had ever since been thwarting the efforts of his family to keep him in a state of elegant leisure. It gave him pleasure to thwart them, quite aside from the ab-

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solite necessity, to him, of an active life. He cared about his money, but he cared much more about doing as he chose, and most about proving that he was "as good a man as ever."

Dan, when he took the noon train to Boston, carried with him the documents assuring the building of the smelter, and also an agreement between himself personally and Purcell providing that if Dan could get the necessary traffic agreement with the Union Pacific, Purcell would go out to Wyoming, and, if satisfied, would advance a large proportion of the money needed for the railroad.

V.

ON Tuesday Dan did not return to New York, but Anna had a note from him, written in Boston the morning before, in which he said that he found work at the office that would keep him for several days. The first instalment of Purcell's money was to be paid over to the company's account on Wednesday. Dan had telegraphed the news to Grand, and asked him to telegraph back a thousand dollars. The arrangement had been that when Dan's trip to New York should be thus successful, the company was to refund all his expenses.

Meantime, "Boston was waking up to the copper situation." A number of copper stocks which had been in the market all summer, were now moving. At their own office, there had been received, in the last few days, more subscriptions than in the three months preceding. Two of the Boston papers had had editorials on Copper, which he enclosed. He was getting out advertisements for next day's paper, moving into a larger office and getting ready for business. He hoped to see her by Friday or Saturday.

Meantime, Anna was extremely irritated to find, he said nothing about sending money for the weekly hotel bill, which was now due. She tore up his letter in anger, and left it in a little heap of fragments by her plate. She had breakfasted in the hotel, but now saw herself reduced to going out alone to some

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cheap restaurant for her other meals. She hated cheap restaurants—hated going out alone. And who could tell how long Dan might be away? His goings and comings were as uncertain as the wind.

In the reading-room she looked languidly through a newspaper, and finally turned to the advertising pages and looked for musical advertisements, but did not find what she sought there. Anna wondered if Mrs. O'Beirne could tell her anything about teachers; she thought it very likely that Nicholas Purcell could. A winter in New York, with peace and freedom to study—her mind had dwelt on that happy prospect ever since her talk with Nicholas. Why should it not be this winter? Dan would be busy, and unsettled most likely; and he seemed very well able to get on without her. And a winter in New York, with the people it now seemed possible she might know there—decidedly that would be worth while! The living was the main difficulty that presented itself to her, for she thought Dan could not be so unkind as to oppose her staying. But it was very likely she would have to live in a poor way. What practice she had had in scaling Dan's visions down to actual facts, taught her that they would probably be poor for some time to come—if indeed they were ever to be anything else. And when she thought that expense might be a bar to her desire, her project took a wider range. In place of studying, she might at once begin to earn money by her voice. Concert-singing was out of the question, she knew, without at least a year's further training. But she might get a church engagement. Or there was the stage—a vague idea in the background of her thought, but it indicated the lengths

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she was prepared to go rather than abandon her plan.

She went up to her room and made herself ready for the street, putting on a black hat and gloves. Her gown was black cloth, one of her winter dresses which the cooler weather now made it possible to wear. She felt that it was suitable and that she looked well in it, and accordingly was at ease, at least in the hotel. But she disliked very much the attentive glances that followed her in the street. It was altogether different when Dan was with her, or when she could have a cab; then she did not mind glances. But to be looked at boldly, perhaps not recognized for what she was, that was terrible to her. Colonel O'Beirne's hotel was hardly ten minutes walk from hers, however, and she went down Fifth Avenue and up the cross street, avoiding Broadway.

The O'Beirnes had gone to Washington and would not be back for several days. Anna had no liking for either of them, but her disappointment was keen. She had no way now of proceeding another step, until somebody came back—either Flora O'Beirne, Dan or Purcell. In the whole city she knew nobody else, excepting a lawyer who had once dined with them, and of him she knew only his name, and did not want to know more. She walked back up the Avenue, feeling deserted. But there were things that interested her to look at. The town was, as Purcell had said, waking up. The storm had washed it clean for the time being, and under the bright blue sky it wore a shining morning face. There was a touch of crispness in the air, that made the people in the street fill their lungs and walk briskly. Either they looked better in con-

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sequence, or the change of air had brought in a better-looking class. Even the appearance of the fashionable shops in the basements and first floors of the old dwelling-houses along the avenue had changed almost overnight. The shops with curios, antiques, rugs and pictures, interested Anna a good deal, but she walked more slowly past the milliners', in each of whose chaste windows bloomed discreetly two or three oblations to the coming season.

Having passed the shops she had also temporarily passed the region of interest, for the dwelling-houses proper, up toward the Park, were still tightly closed; the boarded-up doors and windows seemed to keep a blank superiority toward the new life of the street.

Anna wondered if Purcell or if his sister lived in one of those houses. Mrs. Vaughan must have a husband: what was he like? Were they all up at Lenox now, with the red-haired woman and the blond man? Should she see Purcell again? He had indicated that he meant to see her, when his sister's return from nursing her father left him free to come back to the city. But very likely he had forgotten. Why had not Dan mentioned Mrs. Vaughan in his letter? He must have seen her at Marshbrook, and he knew she was interested in Mrs. Vaughan. But Dan never wrote about interesting things. Only about business, business, business. And there would be nothing but business at River City. A winter at River City—oh, no, it was no longer possible. If only Purcell would come again, she would ask his advice, yes, his help. If he did not come—well, she might write to him. Anna felt a little desperate. . . .

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If it was a coincidence that he appeared on that day, it was one that might have happened any day; for he was often in her thoughts, as the only person known to her who might relieve the dreariness of her situation. He came, in fact, at five; and Anna had been in her room at the hotel since half-past four, with the intention of not missing him, if he should come. Again she found him in the Turkish room; and she now decided that he preferred that place on account of the superior ease of the seats, and also that the limpness and laziness of mien which she had observed in him were not the effect of the weather, but his normal manner. As he sat one-sided in his chair, his elbow on the back of it, he seemed more loose-jointed and careless than ever. The stray lock of hair hung down on his forehead, too. But Anna was used to his appearance by now, used to his tired but interested look, his amiable smile; and she thought him, as she might have said, very distingué.

"You see we have begun to treat you better already," Purcell said. "Aren't you in a friendlier mood to us than you were last week? At least from now on you'll find it possible to live here."

Anna was a little startled and puzzled, till she perceived that he was simply referring to the weather.

"Oh, I hope so," she said fervently.

Purcell thought she was even handsomer than before, and for some reason or other, looking more alive. How much of the rose in her cheeks and the light in her eyes was due to the autumnal air and how much to the pleasure of seeing him, he could not, of course, be expected to guess.

"Oh, you *are* in a friendlier mood," he said, half-

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laughing. "The other day, if you remember, you were very doubtful about it—wanting to live here, I mean. There were all sorts of conditions——"

"I've been thinking about it since," said Anna.

"And got rid of the conditions? I hope so."

"Oh, no, there are conditions. But not the ones I was thinking of the other day. I've been thinking——"

She paused, the idea having occurred to her that she ought really to tell Dan about her plan before discussing it with this friendly stranger. But Dan, as usual when he was wanted, was not within reach, and surely this opportunity was not to be lost! She frowned at her awkwardness—Purcell looked amused, and she blushed and hurried on, "I have thought of studying here in New York this winter, since you spoke of it. I mean, of course I had thought of it before, vaguely—but now I don't see why I shouldn't do it this winter. And I wondered if you could tell me of a good teacher to go to."

"Let me see. My sister was studying something last winter—no, though, it was acting, I believe. But I know plenty of people who have studied, or who could tell me about it—and I'll find out. I'll get a list for you."

"Oh, thank you—but that would be too much to ask! I don't want to trouble you——"

"It won't be any trouble. A couple of notes, of two lines each, will bring me all the information I want. But it will be several days—a week perhaps. You see the people I thought of consulting are off in the country somewhere. I'll telegraph to Margaret to-night—my sister. She ought to know somebody."

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"Telegraph? Oh, there isn't any such hurry as that!"

"Well, it's easier than writing. I always telegraph to Margaret. She'll be interested too, if she hears it's for you. She got back to Lenox yesterday, and before I left she'd talked to me a full hour about your husband. She said he was the most interesting person she'd met in ages; that the time she spent with him at Marshbrook was the only time she hadn't been bored there—and any amount of things. She took him sailing, I believe, and monopolized all she could of his stay there—but she said she got more pleasure out of it than he did, she thought."

"Why, he never wrote me a word about it!" cried Anna, her wide gaze speaking surprise and a grievance. "He didn't mention your sister, or any sail, or anything! His letter was all about business——" She checked herself, sensitive about seeming to complain about Dan, and managed to laugh. "But he'll tell me all about it when I see him," she ended.

"Oh, your husband isn't here, then?"

"No, he's in Boston—for several days, I suppose."

"I'm sorry, very. I'd hoped that you and he would dine with me to-night."

"Oh!" Anna turned quite pale with disappointment. "I'm very sorry too. I'm sure he would have liked it—very much—and so should I."

"Well, why can't I still make up a little party, perhaps with those friends of yours—the O'Briens——?"

"O'Briens? Oh, you mean the O'Beirnes. But they're not friends of mine. And anyhow they're in Washington."

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"Everybody's out of town—it's a nuisance, isn't it? And really it's very hard on me. I shall have to dine all alone."

"No harder than on me. But I'm getting quite used to it," said Anna resignedly.

"Well, I don't see why we shouldn't dine together, do you? If you really would like it?"

"Oh."

Purcell thought he understood her by this time, pretty well. He felt the struggle between her wish and her fear of offending propriety which made a blank pause. But she must say something. And to refuse now would look silly and awkward, Anna said to herself, palpitating. It would look as though she thought he had suggested something improper. And he had made the suggestion in such a matter-of-fact way——! No, it must be all right, of course. She said, rather lamely, rather timidly:

"I should be very glad—if you would like it."

Purcell thought her charming. He was conscious of a flashing wish that his sister, or her husband, or somebody, had been available; and of a more lasting satisfaction that they were not. It would be too bad to do anything to put this pretty creature at odds with her husband—who looked like an elemental, jealous brute—or with herself. But it would be too bad, also, to sacrifice what promised to be a pleasant experience. It was literally true that he knew nobody in town now who could reasonably be asked to share their little expedition; but at least one ought to be allowed the advantage of the fact that nobody was in town. He meant to take Anna to a little restaurant which is fairly unfrequented even in the season,

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though one can get as good food there as is procurable in New York; the few who go to it cheerfully paying for the many who stay away. And when they had agreed on the hour of seven, he went around there to order the dinner, Monsieur Chapuis liking to be consulted a little in advance if his best efforts are desired.

However, until Anna actually found herself on the way thither, it had seemed to her by no means certain that she was going. She was not certain of anything about the affair—whether Purcell should have asked her to go, or whether she should have consented. She wished that she had known him longer; that Dan knew his family in a way, did not really alter the fact that she had seen him only three times. She really knew nothing about him, and, what might be worse, he knew nothing about her. Since her experience with De Ronde, Anna had had a pathetic fear of being put in an equivocal position, of being treated lightly or rudely. She was conscious that she knew little of the world, and that her marriage had so far not given her the calm assurance which she had thought the prerogative of married women. With Purcell she knew she had no assurance at all. After he had left her she fell into a kind of panic. Suppose he thought less of her for going? And what would Dan say about it?

But the thought of Dan was a counter-irritant. If Dan had not broken his agreement to come back on that day, it wouldn't have happened. It was Dan's fault. Dan coolly left her alone, without a friend, without sufficient money, even depriving her of the convenience of a watch——! At this point she shed

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a tear or two, and began to feel that she was fairly entitled to a little pleasure.

And how very quiet and irreproachable a pleasure it proved! Beyond the simple fact that she went, nobody could reasonably object to anything in the proceeding. They walked the few squares to and from the restaurant, Anna enjoying the sharp evening air and also her handsome furs, which she wore with a dark cloth dress and black hat. And the moment she was with Purcell again, her tremors disappeared. He had a kind of brotherly, almost prosaic way of taking charge of her. In his manner was no trace of the kind of admiration now odious to her through association with De Ronde. The interest he showed seemed to take no account of her beauty. She could find only one word for it—it was just friendly, and it was as delightful as new to her.

The restaurant seemed to consist of two rooms, in which stood perhaps a dozen little tables, not set out and ready for guests, but simply there in case anybody came. No other persons were visible when they went in and took the table set for them near the windows; but from the back room came the sound of conversation—a man's voice and a woman's—and of subdued laughter. The place had a quaint plainness, the only decorations being a few small paintings in deep gilt frames, hung so far up that their miniature subjects were hardly to be made out. It was lit by old-fashioned crystal-drop chandeliers, one in each room, reflected in long mirrors between the windows. In fact the scene of Monsieur Chapuis's hospitality had been a private house of sober elegance in its day; and he had preserved as much of its former

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air as possible—the sobriety if not the elegance. The little interior was made to seem still more quiet and isolated, by the roar of the elevated and the clanging of the surface cars, half a block away.

“A queer little place, isn’t it?” said Purcell. “I thought it might be novel to you. After some months of hotel and restaurant life, one gets pretty tired of the round, don’t you think so?”

“Oh, yes! I thought at first that the foreign restaurants were wonderful—you know there isn’t anything like that in the West. But now I hate them—the table d’hôtes, I mean. Mr. Devin likes chop-houses, but they are so noisy, and have such bad music. It’s very quiet here, isn’t it?”

“Yes, that’s the reason I like it. But you oughtn’t to be wanting quiet already—wait for that till you’ve lived four or five years in this uproar. Then you’re allowed to have nerves. But now you should be in the mood to enjoy the enormity of it. I was, when I came back after five years of loafing mainly in little German university towns. After I got over being deafened and shocked by the way life moves here, I was rather exhilarated by it. And the effort that one has to make just to exist, made me feel that I was really working at something. You see it’s impossible to loaf in New York, even if, like me, you do nothing else. But now I have got to the point of wanting to loaf again.”

“Then shall you go back to Germany?”

“Oh, there are other places. No, I don’t think I could go back to the university kind of loafing. You see, I had a sort of excuse then. I was supposed to be studying philosophy. But I came home because

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I really could not impose upon myself any longer—so, of course, there's no use trying it again."

At this point appeared Monsieur Chapuis, a smiling, rosy little man, and after greeting them he presented what were, as he assured Purcell, the first perfect oysters of the season. Twenty-five minutes later he removed the first course with a soup for which also he had a word of commendation. The dinner proceeded by similar easy stages, and in the intervals between his little presentation speeches Monsieur Chapuis disappeared completely, though now and then his voice might be heard for a moment as he attended on the couple within. For the rest, it may be that he cooked the dinner; or, it may be, he thought it discreet to disappear. Anna realized that the dinner was very good; she realized, too, that she enjoyed the intervals more than the food. It did not need the white wine and the red to lighten her spirits, to keep alive her secret excitement; the sight of Purcell, sitting opposite her with a quiet air of belonging there, was enough to do that. And he was telling her things that she was eager to know, about himself, his life.

He was humorous about it; he offered a mock apology for his evident entire uselessness to anyone but himself.

"But what can you expect," he said, "from a person of my antecedents? Have you ever seen my father? Well, he is a New Englander and Puritan to the backbone, and the most strenuous person of my acquaintance. He started life with a fair capital of energy and with a conscience that made him work like the devil. I had a strenuous time of it in my

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youth. He wasn't going to see me damned into idleness if he could help it. I went through Harvard and the law-school on time—but then, I came into a little money, enough to live on. And—I've just been living on it ever since. You see, it's the natural reaction. Our fathers pulled the pendulum too far one way, we swing to the other extreme. Regard me as a type, please. I regard myself in that way. Taking one's self as an interesting scientific phenomenon, I find, is an easy way of avoiding the sting of conscience."

"Does your conscience sting you? Why?" inquired Anna, declining the scientific aspect of the theme.

"Why? Because that is what consciences are made for, I suppose. Did you ever hear of one that didn't sting? If you ask me why I have a conscience, I can only refer again to my Puritan ancestry. But, on the whole, I'm not sorry I have one. I like to try experiments with it."

"Experiments!" laughed Anna. "What an idea!"

"Exactly, you're shocked. I've no doubt you treat your conscience with respect and care, as my ancestors did theirs. When you were a little girl and were dressed up in a fine white frock on Sundays and told to keep it perfectly clean, I've no doubt you sat still with folded hands, and did as you were told. But when I was told to keep my Sunday clothes clean, I couldn't do it. I was miserable till I'd done something to them, to see how they'd look when they were dirty, to see whether I'd be switched or not. Well, it's just the same with my conscience."

"I don't believe you have much on your conscience,

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all the same. You wouldn't think it worth while to do anything wrong, I'm sure."

"Oh, you're mistaken! But I admit that my sins are mainly sins of omission. It could hardly be otherwise, you know, when I don't do anything. But that perhaps is the worst kind. A great many good people think so. I rather think so myself."

"I don't see why. Do you mean that just doing things is a virtue?"

"Certainly. You think so too, don't you? Don't you despise a person who drifts along self-indulgently, amounting to nothing, while all about him men are toiling and accomplishing things—making money, getting themselves elected to Congress, writing books or bringing up families? Oh, I'm a drone in a busy hive."

"I think the drones must have the best time of it."

"But how can they keep their self-respect? They're so looked down on, you see. Sometimes, I believe, they're stung to death by the workers in righteous rage. I often feel very uncomfortable, I assure you. My relatives consider me a melancholy failure. I really only enjoy myself, as a rule, in the society of fellow-drones. But happily there are some energetic and ambitious people who actually afford me a little sympathy now and then. You've been very indulgent."

"I? But do you call *me* energetic? I don't do anything!"

"Oh, you're energetic—ambitious. Aren't you going to work hard in New York this winter? By the way, I've telegraphed to my sister. I'll send you her answer to-morrow."

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"Oh, thank you. But I am giving you so much trouble—and it isn't even certain that I *can* stay. I only hope to. But I shan't know till Mr. Devin comes back—unless I write him about it. I can do that."

Anna made a mental note to write to Dan; and Purcell noted that Dan was so far in ignorance of her plan. He at once set it down as unlikely that she would stay.

"I would do a good deal for the sake of staying," she went on, her unwonted reserve beginning to give way. "I'd even thought of something on the stage, perhaps—if there wasn't any other way."

Purcell was a good deal puzzled by this. Did she mean by the "other way" money? Did she mean that her husband might not have the money—which was unlikely, considering he had just bagged a good many thousands of the old gentleman's—or that he might not give it to her? Was she going to quarrel with him about it? And why the stage as alternative? Why was she anxious to stay in New York if not to study? Was she going to quarrel with her husband anyhow?

"Ah, that *is* energetic," he said. "But—I doubt whether you'd like the stage. At least you wouldn't unless you're very, very energetic."

"Oh, I'm afraid I'm not," sighed Anna. "And I don't agree with you in one way, I don't think it's a virtue to be. There's only one thing that I think worth while doing—and that is, to enjoy life! If you do that, you're a success—if you don't, you're a failure, no matter what you do."

And she nodded emphatically, with her shining glance full of defiant meaning.

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"But you've named the occupation that is the hardest—to most people—in the world," protested Purcell. "You've no idea how hard people work at that—and fail, most of them."

"Well, that doesn't matter. Some people succeed, and without trying very hard either. I think you do—don't you?"

"Oh, I don't know. No, I don't think I'm a success, in your sense of the word. I don't enjoy life—in any definite, spectacular way. I'm not young enough—or pagan enough. And yet it's true that if—if I were Faust and had made his compact with the devil, I should have been damned without a doubt."

"What compact?" she asked, intently.

"Faust said to the devil, you know, that if he could ever make him, Faust, so content with the passing moment that he said to it 'Verbleibe doch, du bist so schön'—'Remain, you are so beautiful!'—the devil could have his soul. In that way I could have lost my soul over and over again."

"Then you *have* enjoyed life."

"And I could never have slid out of the bargain as Faust did! You remember how he was saved——?"

"No, except that he goes up to heaven with Marguerite——"

"Well, in the poem he *does* say to the moment, *Verbleibe doch*—but it is in contemplating his own good deeds. He has built an aqueduct which benefits large numbers of his fellow-creatures—and because of that virtue of his the devil is foiled and Faust goes to heaven! You see the moral of that is on my side—or rather against me personally and for my argument. I could never build anything like an aqueduct

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—or a railroad. And one must be strenuous to be saved.”

“And to be happy? Do you think so?” Anna asked rather wistfully.

“I suppose so,” said Nicholas. “At least other people will make you unhappy if you’re not.”

“I don’t believe you’re unhappy,” she said gravely. “It would be a shame if you should be made so, just because you don’t agree with somebody else——”

“But if you can’t agree with ‘somebody else’ you oughtn’t to be fond of them. You can’t be happy and constantly irritated too—though you may love and be irritated, I suppose.”

“That’s true,” said Anna sombrely

And they looked at one another with a sudden feeling of intimacy, though their confidences, that evening, went no further.

VI.

NEXT day Anna had a note from Purcell, enclosing this telegram: "Bella says try F. Kreisner or Madame Venner, both expensive. List of teachers at music-stores. When do you return—M."

His note gave her the two addresses, and promised further data, which he expected to get from a musical critic of his acquaintance. "I ought to have thought of him in the first place instead of my sister," he ended. "It seems singing is one of the few things she hasn't tried herself."

Anna found his handwriting very difficult to read—a rapid, careless scrawl, each word ending formlessly in the same running dash. The paper bore the name of the University Club.

She pondered a long time over his note and the telegram. She would have liked to consult one of the teachers named, but she was a little nervous about the question of fees, since her money was nearly gone. So she simply wrote Dan a note, acquainting him with the latter fact and asking when he meant to come back. Then she went out to dinner alone, choosing a restaurant in the shopping district, which was fairly good, cheap, and much frequented, as she had observed, by women apparently in no need of escorts. Some of these women had the flashy "style" and the hard faces which inspired Anna with con-

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tempt and loathing; they generally came in couples. But the other sort, the majority, had a solid business-like air, and were plainly though well enough dressed. Generally each one had an evening newspaper, which she would prop up against the cruet in the middle of the table, and read while she ate her solitary meal. There would be family parties, too, often. The front part of the restaurant was usually filled with men; many of these wore diamonds in their ties and on their little fingers, which glittered in the electric light as they selected their dinner from the show-case containing live crabs and lobsters. But all was orderly and reasonably quiet, even to the music of piano, violin and 'cello.

Anna studied the lone women now with unusual interest. Soon, she reflected, she might be one of them. She must try to acquire that matter-of-fact look, to feel, as they apparently did, that nobody was looking, or at least that what she did was nobody's affair. And it would be nobody's affair. She might be utterly alone. Her face was very melancholy as she considered this prospect. Purcell probably had left the city, or at least he would be leaving again soon. Had not the telegram shown that? And then he had spoken of going abroad again. Of course she could not count on him in any way—and who else was there? Perhaps it would be better, after all, to give it up, and to go back West with Dan.

If it were only to mean a sort of business life—hard work, solitary meals, going home at night with your veil over your face, and your eyes and ears shut, as far as possible, to the life of the streets—why, then, even River City might be preferable. But it need

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not mean only that. If she knew only a few people like the Purcells, had even occasional glimpses of their life, it would make her own interesting.

She was still halting and hesitating when Dan came, two days later. She was not expecting him, though he had written her that he was coming. She was rather vaguely expecting Purcell. It was the hour when he had come before, and she sat in her room. Dan came in with a whirl, threw a half-dollar to the boy who brought in his suit-case, coat, and parcels, and had Anna in his arms before Buttons was fairly out of the room.

"Did you think I was never coming? I got your note yesterday—whew! it sounded mad. Don't blame you though, dearest! It was pretty hard on you. But honestly I couldn't help it. The money only came this morning—from Grand, I mean, and I rushed right off. Only for a day though; then I must go back to Boston. Things are beginning to hum now, at last!"

Anna felt a little comforted when he held her close. She was unfeignedly glad to see him. There was at least usually something doing when Dan was about. He brought with him a stir of excitement, perhaps gayety—at least of life. Now he put Anna into a chair, and dropped a florist's box into her lap. She found a dozen great red roses, their long stems stuck through a hole cut in the pasteboard. He had brought also some of her favorite chocolates and a bundle of magazines and papers.

"You may like to see what they say in Boston about copper *now*," he said with his militant air. "But I'll brush up a bit and we'll have some dinner first, then

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I'll tell you about things. I've been pretty busy over there. You look well, dearest."

"Oh, I am well enough," Anna said.

She lay back in the low chair, holding the roses to her face, her eyes looking rather contentedly over them. Dan came to kiss her again. Then whistling he took out of his coat-pockets half-a-dozen jeweller's boxes and laid them on the bureau.

"I guess we won't have to do *that* again," he remarked cheerfully.

"Oh, my rings! Give them to me!" she cried.

She took out the rings and put them on, slipped her watch into her belt and held up the open cases containing her two diamond brooches, moving them slightly to catch the colored lights.

"Poor girl!" said Dan suddenly.

She did not answer and he stood looking at her thoughtfully.

"Have you missed them much?" he asked, smiling, with a kind of tender pity. Anna answered carelessly, piqued by his tone,

"I hate to lose things. Yes, I'm glad to get them back."

"And I'm glad to get *you* back," said he not very relevantly.

At his request Anna put on her blue silk and the diamonds, and they dined early at the hotel.

Dan was full of the prospects in Boston. Josiah Purcell's large purchase of the Mallory stock had started a run on it. They had sold off all that offered at five dollars a share and put the price up to seven-fifty. The next lot offered would be at par. With their new offices and a proper use of Purcell's

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name, which counted for a good deal over there, Dan calculated that it wouldn't be long before there was something like a rush for it. Copper was the thing now anyway. Boston was a bit slow about waking up, but when she *did* have a good thing hammered into her head . . .

"Is Mr. Purcell very rich?" inquired Anna.

"Oh, he has a few millions salted away. But it's his character that counts. He's known as a safe, conservative sort of man, you see——"

"You didn't write anything about your visit there—or about his sister—I mean Mr. Purcell's daughter," said Anna reproachfully.

"Didn't I? Well, I don't know as there was much to write about. They treated me well, but I was only there one night, you know."

"Well, you met the daughter—what's her name, by the way? I suppose she's married, isn't she? And you went sailing with her."

"Oh, Mrs. Vaughan. Yes, I did, but it didn't seem to me there was anything very interesting about that. How did you know I went, anyhow?"

"Oh, Nicholas Purcell told me. He's been here several times. He said his sister had quite fallen in love with you."

"With me! Well, she didn't give me any hint of it. She subscribed for a hundred shares of Mallory, though."

"Oh, bother Mallory. Tell me about her, and what kind of place have they? I suppose it's very grand?"

"No, it isn't. Just a big old house that's been in the family for a couple of hundred years or so, and

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when Purcell made his money they enlarged it and made it over a bit—but it isn't grand. It's in the Colonial style, more or less, so Mrs. Vaughan told me. Candles to go to bed by and your great-grandfather's bed to sleep in, and all that. Comfortable, though. The old gentleman was still in bed when I got there, and Mrs. Vaughan and I had dinner together. Are you jealous?"

"Well, and you didn't mention it! What did you have for dinner? Was there a butler? What did she have on? What did you talk about?"

"Good gracious, how can I remember? The dinner was good enough. There was a man to wait on us, I suppose the butler. And I guess we talked about Mallory a good deal."

"Well, she told her brother you were the most interesting man she'd met for a long time!"

"Oh, she was interested in the railroad and all that. You see, she subscribed. And Purcell is going to see the thing through, I think, Anna! The railroad, I mean. He told me to go ahead and get the traffic agreement with the Union Pacific people; and he's coming out there to look it over this fall. By Jove, the thing's as good as built now—we're all right!"

"I thought it was the smelter he was going to help build."

"That's where the money he's just paid over goes. They'll push the work right ahead now. But this other, the railroad, is a private deal between Purcell and me. I had the first survey made myself and the right of way is partly secured. I shan't let those other fellows in."

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"Well, how long will it take to build it?"

"Oh, perhaps a year, counting the preliminary work that has to be done. I've got to go straight back and begin on that."

"How soon do you go back?"

"In about a week. I must spend a few days more in Boston, then we're off. And I want to stop on the way back and see my mother. You know she lives up in Wisconsin now with one of my brothers. That'll mean another day or so, but I'll have to do it. She felt rather hurt that I didn't stop coming East. How would you like to go to a theatre to-night?"

"What theatre?" said Anna absently. She was thinking that the time had come to tell Dan—but should she tell him definitely that she intended to stay, or only that she had thought of it?

"Oh, anything you like. There are a couple of those musical shows and there's that English actress. Waiter, get me an evening paper, will you?"

"Yes, sir," murmured the functionary, with respect if not alacrity.

When the paper was brought, their choice narrowed down to a war-drama and the English company's problem play, Anna declining the comic operas. She rather urged the melodrama, assuring Dan that it was more his sort, but Dan was not to be outdone in generosity.

"That means you'd rather see the other, and this is your picnic," he said. "I want you to have a good time to-night. I suppose you've been lonely. Did Mrs. O'B. come to see you?"

"No, but I went out to dinner one night with somebody. Guess who."

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"Couldn't guess. I didn't know you knew anybody."

"Nicholas Purcell. Are you jealous?"

"Oh—I guess not. I didn't know you knew him well enough for that, though."

"Well, he came to ask you and me. And as usual you weren't here—and I hadn't money enough for a decent meal——"

She stopped, astonished herself at the sudden flood of bitterness that rose in her.

Dan flushed. He was silent while he folded up the newspaper with unnecessary care and dropped it under the table.

"I hope you had a good time," he said then, with an effort after his usual manner. "Where did you go?"

"I don't know the name. A little place not far from here. A French place, very quiet and nice. There was only one other couple there, and dinner lasted two hours and a half!"

Anna, too, made an effort at lightness. Dan looked at her, troubled, a sudden spark in his blue eyes.

"I don't know whether he ought to have taken you there," he said. "I'll find out."

"Oh, Dan!" Anna cried, and bit her lip. It would not do to quarrel here. Dan never could quarrel decorously. She threw down her napkin. "I don't want any dessert. Let's go upstairs. I want to tell you something."

"Very well. I'll see about the theatre-tickets, then I'll be up."

Anna, walking up and down their small room, tried

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to think calmly, tried to see why it was that Dan's suspicion of Purcell had so roused her own feeling. She only knew that she was angry, hurt, miserable, that everything seemed wretched. In such a mood how could she spare Dan? As soon as he had come in and lit his cigar, she began, her voice trembling slightly.

"I hope you will not do anything absurd—or say things as silly as that—about 'finding out!' There isn't anything to 'find out.' Mr. Purcell simply took me to the quietest place he knew, I suppose. He is a gentleman, and has always treated me with perfect respect, and he wouldn't do anything that you or anybody could object to."

"How do you know he wouldn't?"

"Well, I *do* know it! He is—he is——"

"Now, Anna, we've got wrong on this thing. I'm not blaming you, I had no idea of it," said Dan earnestly. "When I spoke that way I simply meant that—well, you don't know the world, my dear girl. I didn't like the sound of it—just at the minute. But perhaps it is all right—and I'm sure about *you*. You know, of course, that I wasn't blaming you."

Anna avoided his caress. She sat down in the easy-chair and said very coldly:

"I had something I wanted to say. It's this: I don't want to go to Wyoming this winter."

Dan sat down on the bed and looked at her perplexedly.

"You don't want to go? Why not?"

"I want to stay here and go on with my music.

"But—couldn't you go on with it out there? You'll have a piano——"

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"Piano! I want a teacher, and a good one. I want to make progress, to do something with my voice. What could I do in a one-horse mining town?"

"Well, Anna!"

He rose and in his turn began to walk the room.

"This is a complete surprise to me. You want to stay in New York? But—how could you? I can't be here. How could I leave you here—alone?"

Anna drew a quick breath.

"*Haven't* you left me here alone, time and time again? *Didn't* you leave me alone in Los Angeles for months? How do I know that you won't leave me out there alone? I never know where you're going to be—you don't know yourself!"

Dan received these rapid sentences in momentarily dumb amazement.

"But Anna! I couldn't help it! You must see yourself. It will be different out there. We shall have a house at River City. I shall be there most of the time——"

"*Most* of the time! Then you admit you'll be away part of the time!"

"Don't be absurd, Anna. You can see that I'll have to be. With a big deal like this on my hands, a great many people to see about it, a great many matters to arrange—of course I shall have to be away on short trips. But surely—Why you should feel hurt about it, as you seem to be——! I'd no idea you depended on me so much as that!"

Anna thrust the half-playful suggestion away fiercely.

"I wouldn't—if I had anything else!" she said. "But out there I wouldn't have anything."

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"Well, if you feel that way—perhaps you could go with me on my trips, or most of them——"

"I don't *want* to! That isn't what I want. You can't understand. I want a place of my own, something settled, some peace and enjoyment in life! I don't want to live here and there, in any horrid uncomfortable way, never knowing where I'm to be to-morrow! You are happy that way, but I'm miserable! I've been miserable almost ever since we've been married. You're always telling me about what we're going to have some day. I don't care about that, I want something *now*."

She sat upright in her chair, her hands clasping the arms tightly. Her voice had not risen, but the sharpness always latent in its clear tones now made it unpleasant to the ear. A single electric jet beside the bureau was lit. Its chilly light shone directly down on her blond head. Her eyes in shadow looked black and hard.

Dan stood perfectly still where her last sentence had struck him, across the room with his back to her, his head slightly bent, holding the cigar between the fingers of his right hand. He stood there while the glowing tip of the cigar gathered a perceptible cover of ashes.

At last he wheeled and came quickly toward her.

"You don't mean that. You don't mean what you say—all that. I know you have had hard things to bear—I know you haven't had things the way you wanted them—but I have tried to make it as easy for you as I could. It hasn't been easy——"

He bent over her, laid his hand on hers, unconsciously appealing to the great solvent that had such

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power with himself. At just the touch of her, his hurt pride yielded, bowed down to her. His voice became imploring. Anna, erect, hard, repelled him, though passively. Yet she too moderated her tone.

"I know, but you don't understand *how* it has been hard for me," she said tragically. "It was a terrible wrench, losing everything as we did. Everything seemed to go at once—everything I was trying to do. And I haven't been able to do anything since. It would make me very much happier if I could use my voice some way. But now I feel that that is being wasted too—everything——"

Her lips trembled. She stopped, gripping the arms of the chair in an effort not to cry.

"Anna! If that is the way you feel—tell me just what you want. You know I want you to be happy more than anything else in the world. I will do anything I can. Tell me."

He dropped down on the floor beside her, took her hand and drew it to his lips.

"Well, I have told you," she said, still tragically. "I want to stay here and work. I could live quietly somewhere, I suppose. And I think another year or perhaps less would do——"

A silence. Then Dan asked:

"Have you any idea what teacher you would want? Do you know anyone here?"

"Not yet. But I can find out. Mr. Purcell gave me some names."

"Oh, you asked him about it?"

"Yes, I asked him."

"Do you know how much it would cost?"

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"I don't know exactly. But I suppose twenty-five or thirty dollars a week."

"And how would you live?"

"I suppose in a boarding-house. There must be plenty of cheap ones. Do you think—will there be money enough to do it?"

"Oh, money—yes, I guess that can be arranged. Though there won't be a great deal to spare this winter——"

Anna pulled her hand away with an impatient gesture.

"Well, can you spare it or not? Or don't you *know*? If you do, for heaven's sake say so. It's just what I can't bear—this everlasting uncertainty—I would rather go out there and live in a shanty!"

"I don't think that will be necessary," said Dan more sharply.

He got up and began walking the floor again, one hand thrust in his trousers' pocket, the other still holding the cigar. Once he put the cigar in his mouth and found it had gone out, but still continued to hold it absently. His face, slightly frowning, the vertical fold between the eyebrows strongly marked, was grave and intent.

Anna laughed a little.

"I don't see why you take it so seriously," she cried. "It isn't such a tremendous thing."

"It is serious, to me," Dan said, coming to a stop before her. "It's a serious thing to me to leave you absolutely alone in this big city, without a friend—when I'm to be a week's journey away."

"I won't be without a friend," she assured him. "I shall know some people. I do know some already."

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"You do? Who? The O'Beirnes won't be here——"

"I'm not thinking about the O'Beirnes. There's" — she was about to mention Mrs. Vaughan, but recollected that she had not yet met her—"Mr. Purcell said his sister wanted to meet me, and she will be in town soon."

"Are you counting on them—that crowd?" demanded Dan. "I hope not."

"Well, why not?"

"Because they're not our sort. They're fashionable people, I suppose. Anyhow they have their own friends and their own ways—and they're not ours. I don't believe they'll do you any good, Anna, even if you see them."

"I don't see why they're not my sort! Do you mean I'm not good enough to associate with them?"

"Don't be a fool. You know what I mean. They won't take the trouble to find out whether you are or not. I know what these Eastern people are—they think the Lord never made anything good but what they've got. That young Purcell is an example. Father told me he never did a stroke of work in his life and never will. If that's what their money comes to, that sort of fellow, loafing round Europe and thinking this country isn't good enough for him—well, the less we see of 'em the better."

"I don't agree with you," Anna said hotly. "I think the only use of money is to let people live decently and get some cultivation and knowledge of the world. You don't get that by grubbing away in a corner. And I hope I *shall* see those people. They're the kind I like. I like Nicholas Purcell. He's in-

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teresting. And he's kind too, and understands things. But I don't care whether I see them or not, I want to stay."

She sprang up.

"I would rather live in the poorest place here than go back out there. I hate the idea of the West. And if you can't give me money enough to study, I can get some kind of position. I can support myself, while I am training. And after *that* I shall have enough."

"After what?"

"After I am fitted for concert-singing—or the stage."

"The stage! You're crazy, Anna. Do you think I would let you go on the stage?"

"I don't care whether you would let me or not!" she panted. "I shall do exactly as I choose. You would like to prevent me from living at all. It was your fault that our home was broken up, and that I have to help myself now. If you had not been reckless it wouldn't have happened. And I had given it all up to please you—to marry you. And you deceived me. When you married me you didn't let me know what chances you were taking. And now—and now—how do I know that it won't be just the same over again? I don't believe you will succeed—"

"And when you say you are afraid to leave me alone! I am used to being left alone! When you left me in Los Angeles people insulted me because of it! Yes, insulted me! A man tried to make love to me, and he said everybody thought we had separated—that I had gone back to my parents——"

"Stop!" said Dan.

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He seized both her wrists and held her quiet, and his eyes held hers and checked her hysterical passion.

"Who was the man—if there's any sense in what you say?"

"It was De Ronde, if you want to know. And even here—you say it was insulting me, to take me out to dinner——"

"I didn't say it. If I thought it——"

Anna stared at him. He looked as she had never seen him. He was deadly pale, and his eyes, looking straight into hers, seemed not to see her. His hold on her wrists relaxed, his hands dropped. And still his eyes held hers, vacant themselves, as though all sense had been crushed out of the brain behind them. Suddenly he put out one hand gropingly and took hold of the back of a chair. His gaze shifted. He seemed to be looking at the crimson roses which filled a vase on the bureau. Near the vase lay a little paper envelope containing the theatre-tickets. Dan stared at that for some moments.

At last he moved, went over to the bureau, took up the envelope, tore it in two and threw the pieces on the floor. And then, without looking again at Anna, who still stood defiant, he took his hat and coat and went out of the room.

VII.

ANNA sat in the white-and-gilt parlor talking to Flora O'Beirne. That is, Flora was doing the talking. A few questions had given her the information that Daniel had gone back to Boston, that he had nearly completed his work there and that it had gone to his satisfaction; and, apropos of what she called his success, Flora described the "wild-goose chase" on which the Colonel and herself had been wasting their time in Washington. A certain Senator who had large investments in Mexico had been over their Mexican lands some months before and had practically promised Colonel O'Beirne to help build his railroad. He had certainly been very much interested. And now they could not even get sight of him.

"He wouldn't see us! What do you think of that? And in reply to Michael's letter his secretary just wrote that Senator H—— couldn't give any attention to the matter." Flora sighed. "So heaven knows how long we shall be here. Your husband is a mighty clever man, don't you think so, my dear? He got what he wanted in no time. It's sure, isn't it, that the road will be built out there?"

"Oh, yes, he thinks so," said Anna.

"And this Boston man puts up the money."

"I believe so."

"Well, there it is. I'm glad, delighted. And yet

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I dare say your husband had to work like a slave to get it. It's just as Michael says. Capital is as coy as a pretty woman, and takes an everlasting amount of wooing!" Flora laughed. "You see a woman, if a man's enough in love with her, knows she can just sit quiet and let him do the worrying, she knows he *has* to have her. Well, it's so with these moneyed people: they know we have to have their money—and they make us work for it—Lord! the months that Michael and I have spent—the thousands of miles we have travelled—the amount he has talked——! And all to convince some old Money-Bags that he can make another fortune if he'll only turn over his hand. But Daniel—you don't mind my calling him Daniel, do you? I'm almost old enough to be his mother—Daniel has a gift for convincing people. I thought Michael could talk, but, my dear, your husband has a way with him——! I should expect him to get anything he'd set his heart on. I like him—Michael and I both like him tremendously. Do you think we'll ever see you down in Mexico? It is a beautiful country really—now that the Apaches are all good Indians."

"I don't know, I'm sure," Anna said languidly. "You don't really expect me to tell you where he'll be next year—or next month—do you?"

"Oh, I know, that's the worst of it," sighed Flora. "A woman wants a roof over her head, doesn't she? It's true, as Michael says, we're all like the house-cat. We like the chimney corner and a place we're used to. But then what of it? As the old song says,

What'll ye do if ye marry a sojer,
But pack up your clothes and go marchin' wid him!" "

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Anna was silent, only smiling mechanically. She could not echo the cheerfulness of Flora's tone; even to speak was an effort to her. She had passed the night without sleep, except for a miserable doze after daylight, haunted and broken by the listening for Dan's step. He had not come. But early in the morning he had sent a messenger, with a note asking for his suit-case packed for a few days' stay, and saying that he would write her from Boston. The note, with what she had come to consider his habitual carelessness, enclosed two hundred-dollar bank bills.

Anna's paleness and heavy eyes had not escaped her visitor's notice.

"I came to ask you to take lunch with me," Flora said, "but you look tired. Perhaps you'd rather not go out."

"Oh, yes, I'd like it. I didn't sleep very well; but I'd like to go." Anna was even eager in her acceptance. She wanted some relief from her thoughts.

"Well, I'm very glad. I came right over because I've learned to take people I want to see on the fly, as you might say. Have to, in our way of life, or I'd never see anybody. And I've got so used to dropping the frills and trying to make acquaintance with people on the spot that I'm sure they often think I'm pushing! But it isn't so, my dear, it's just lack of time. That's the reason I talk about myself so much. It's because I want to hear about other people."

Her soft bright dark eyes looked very kindly on Anna.

"I don't know when I've been more interested than I am in you two," she went on. "Your husband is such a fine fellow, and you're—well, I partly like you,

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I suppose, because you're beautiful. The Lord made me plain, but I can honestly admire another woman who is beautiful, and like her the better for it. And then you're young—you have such a chance——! But you're reserved, you won't tell me about yourself—and the time is so short. You'll be going soon. And unless you'll come down to Mexico I shall never know anything about you!"

"Oh, but there isn't much to tell," said Anna, touched in spite of herself by this real interest, and rather wishing she could respond to it. She was in fact naturally perfectly frank, so long as she could be so without wound or compromise to her vanity. She would cheerfully have talked about herself and her circumstances to the exclusion of anything else, if only she could have painted her subject in bright colors. But when she had ceased to be prosperous and happy she had ceased also to be frank. It would have been impossible for her to talk about Dan, his affairs and her quarrels with life, with Flora O'Beirne's candor. Flora could be candid because at bottom she had no quarrel with life. She could rally her husband, with what seemed to Anna an amazing lack of reticence, because at bottom she was contented with him. But Anna felt that decorum must be preserved at all hazards. She was not going to let anybody know, if she could help it, that she had quarrelled with Dan. And just now she felt more than ever that she was on thin ice; she was fearful of a single step. The events of the night had thrown her mind into confusion. She had gone too far, and the recoil left her with a sick feeling of uncertainty about everything. She did not want to talk about Dan or

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herself. And as for her plans and the advice she had gone to ask of Mrs. O'Beirne, there was no use talking about that now. The advice would come from somebody else. So she said, rather petulantly: "My head aches, and I can't talk very well now. Wouldn't you like to walk a while before lunch? We might walk up to the Park and back."

Accordingly it was again Flora who talked, during their walk, their luncheon and the afternoon that they spent together. An eye less keen than hers could have seen that Anna was in mental stress, unable really to listen or to talk, and yet unwilling to be left alone. So she took Anna to see some pictures and an exhibit of Japanese wood-carvings; gave her tea, and asked her to dine with the Colonel and herself at their hotel.

But this Anna was unable to do. Fatigue due to sleeplessness and worry finally overpowered her.

"I can't keep my eyes open," she confessed. "I'll just go to bed, I think. Couldn't eat any dinner, anyway, after all that tea."

"Well, then, to-morrow night, if your husband doesn't get back? Or if he does, for that matter—we'll be delighted to have you both."

Anna gave a promise for next night, subject to recall by telephone, and they parted at the door of her hotel.

"You've been very good, taking me round when I'm so stupid," Anna said, smiling painfully.

Flora answered affectionately, and standing on tip-toe, kissed her.

She had thought that Purcell would very likely call on her that afternoon, and had been willing for

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once not to see him. And in fact she found his card, and found also that she regretted not seeing him. There was no sign from Dan. She thought he might have written before he went to Boston, or just possibly he might have changed his mind and come back. She took out his brief note and read it again. It began with the usual formula, "Dear Anna"; it gave no clew to his feeling when he wrote it. But he must be deeply angry with her. In all their other quarrels he had been so eager to be reconciled, he had always made the first concession, taken the first step. To be on bad terms with her had made him so utterly miserable that he could not endure it long. Often had he kept her awake all night arguing some point at issue rather than lie down in anger. Never, never before had he put himself out of the way of seeing her, of being reconciled to her. And, of course, she had never before given him such reason.

In spite of her fatigue she spent a restless night, and in the morning took her breakfast in bed. Two letters were brought to her, and she opened Dan's first. It was almost as brief as his note of the day before. He wrote:

"DEAR ANNA:

"Only one thing is clear to me just now, that you must do from now on exactly as you wish, as nearly as possible. If you will find out what arrangements you wish to make for staying in New York I should like to see you settled before I leave for Wyoming, which will be on Tuesday, I expect. I can arrange to send you two hundred dollars a month, and if that is not enough, will try to meet whatever is necessary.

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I expect to reach New York Tuesday morning and to leave for the West Tuesday night.—D. D.”

She read it twice, flushing hotly, then tossed it from her. If that was the way Dan meant to take it—if he kept that attitude—why, then, she would simply try to make herself independent of him at once. It was true she had given him cause to be hurt and angry, she had said hard things, but after all—they were true, most of them. She, not Dan, was the injured person; and though she had felt momentarily in the wrong, if he now took a high and mighty tone and aimed at keeping her there, she would—she would——

She opened the thick envelope addressed in Purcell's writing. It contained several enclosures, letters and a telegram, all bearing on the subject which he had in hand for her. His own note was of the briefest. It said only that he had been very sorry to miss her that afternoon and that he hoped to be more fortunate on the morrow, when he expected to bring her some information more authentic than his various correspondents could furnish.

Really he was taking any amount of trouble for her. If there were many people as kind as that——! But people were generally not kind unless they were interested. Was he really interested in her, and why, she asked herself naïvely. Anna had leaped from one extreme to the other, in her estimate of her own attraction and power. Measuring herself against what she had seen of the women of an older civilization, she felt crude, bare, and rather humble. The emphasis now lay, in her mind, on what she had **not**,

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rather than on what she had. And she was correspondingly pleased and moved by anything that seemed to show she had a value in—well, the eyes of Purcell, for example of what she now felt was best worth pleasing. Since their talk at dinner she had felt, not that she knew much about Purcell, but that for some reason he wanted her to know about him. He had talked frankly about himself. But everything he said, in one way, helped to set him away from her. His experience, so completely beyond her knowledge, and so varied, seemed to make him a being of really a different order from any she had known. She felt timidity in face of this superiority of his, and, strangely, she liked to feel it. She had no idea of trying to impress or dazzle him; wistfully she acknowledged that that was beyond her power; but she did want keenly that he should like her a little—and perhaps he did like her.

She smiled to herself as she lay thinking about him—for Purcell's note had for the moment driven her trouble with Dan out of her mind. But she came back to it with a throb of pain through Dan's criticism of Purcell. Was it possible that Purcell had really not treated her well—as he would have treated any one of the other women he knew? She flushed crimson at the thought. If it were so, Dan was right to be angry, and she had been wrong to be so moved by what he said.

And anyway she had been wrong. She came back miserably to that conclusion. And it tormented her so, the feeling that she had behaved badly, that she rose, put on a dressing-gown and sat down to write to Dan.

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Anna was not skilful with her pen; expression was always difficult to her. She wrote only a few sentences, and they seemed very lame, as she read them over. It seemed cold and ungracious, too, to say simply that she was sorry for what she had said the other night and that she hadn't meant it. But even that was really more than she felt, for she *had* meant it. She couldn't take back what she had said, warmly, completely, asking his forgiveness, making him feel her regret. She did regret her outburst, but it had been only the sign of a deep estrangement, of her passionate criticism and dislike of what he really stood for. So she sealed the stiff little note and sent it off; and went back to bed and cried miserably over the whole situation.

What was to become of her—what could she do with herself? She had made Dan unhappy, she was unhappy herself, and she could not see how they were to go on living together, at least for the present. And yet, to separate! A separation was hardly one shade better than a divorce; in other words it was something almost unimaginable from Anna's point of view. Either one was, in the opinion of the community in which she had grown up, a thing not respectable, not possible without forfeiting all standing in that community. Consequently it was not so much Anna's opinion as something much more deeply vital in her, that revolted at the idea of such a thing happening to herself. In the society she knew, it was almost better to have a relative in the penitentiary, or on the stage, than to be divorced. And though she was no longer a part of that society, its ideals, in all that related to "morals," had never for a moment been

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doubted by her to be the best, in fact the only ones, possible. And the dreadful thing was, that unless her quarrel with Dan could be patched up, they would really be "separated"; whereas, if she remained in New York with his permission, it would be an entirely different matter. Of all the statements she had made in her anger, the least true was that it didn't matter whether she had his permission or not. So far was this from being true, that Anna now saw in a flash that if she could not get Dan's approval of her staying, she would prefer to go back with him. As soon as this was clear to her she had a sense of relief, almost of comfort. Yes, that was the only way out. Dan must decide it. She would go on and get all the information, as he had suggested. Then, if he still objected to her staying, she might be unhappy, but she would yield. The responsibility would then be his, and he could not blame her.

Peace of mind came suddenly with this decision, and Anna composed herself and slept soundly for the first time since the quarrel. Her last thought as she fell asleep was that she must not show the marks of tears and fatigue when Purcell came that afternoon.

In fact, this past emotion left no trace except perhaps a certain chastened look, which had its own radiance and attraction. A brisk walk after luncheon in the open air revived her color and spirits; though in the course of it she had had a somewhat unpleasant experience. Determining to lose no more time in finding a possible place to live, she had cut out some advertisements of boarding-places from the morning paper, and she went to inquire at an address on

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Thirty-ninth Street. This place promised "high-class accommodations" and "strictly refined patronage," and Anna thought she might see what this desirable combination would cost. But when the colored butler had summoned the landlady, and this imposing black-robed personage had studied Anna for a few moments and found out that she would have a piano and practise two or three hours a day, she coldly said that there were no rooms vacant. Anna went away much flustered, and it took a long walk to restore her equanimity. She decided that she would postpone further investigation until Flora O'Beirne could go with her, or at least advise her where to go.

Purcell brought her the name and address of a teacher vouched for by his friend the musical critic.

"Walton says he's an admirable person if you want to study hard and thoroughly. He isn't at all popular, has no pull and of course isn't expensive. In fact he's never got really started here, and very likely never will. Walton knew him in Leipzig. He speaks very little English, is excessively nervous, irritable and brusque, and drives most of his pupils away in one fashion or another. I'm quoting Walton——" Purcell had a little note-book open in his hand, and showed her a page dotted with cryptic scrawls. "I made sure of not missing a single point. 'No magnetism, enthusiasm or way of seeming to help you along. Only helps those who help themselves. Will tell you the stern truth. Loses most of his pupils that way. Suicidal temper. Will cry at times and tell you he intends to cut his throat. Can thoroughly recommend him.' . . . If you're not frightened

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off, Walton will send a note to Herr Pannier and he will do all he can for you. You'll find him any morning at his studio—he has a good deal of leisure."

"It sounds like just what I want," Anna said. "I want to work hard. I'll take down his address—" Purcell wrote it out on a loose leaf of his notebook and gave it to her—"and thank you a hundred times. Really I shouldn't have known what to do if it hadn't been for you."

Purcell smiled. "I'm very glad. I'll tell Walton then to write the note, shall I?"

Anna hesitated and stammered.

"Perhaps—it would be better to wait a day or so. You see—I'm not *absolutely* certain yet. There's a chance that I may—not be here. If it turns out that you've had all this trouble for nothing, what *will* you think of me?"

"It won't be for nothing, in any case. I liked doing it, you see."

"But I shall know now very soon. . . . I hate not to know what I'm going to do, don't you?"

"I hate not to know what I want to do. But perhaps it's the same thing?"

"Oh—I don't know. I'm afraid it isn't, for me. It must be heavenly to be able to do just what you want, and only have to make up your mind what that is."

"Ah, but you oughtn't to have to make up your mind. It ought to be made up for you. If it's only with your mind that you know what you want—why, you're apt not to know at all, and that's far from being heavenly—quite the other thing, in fact."

"But—in case you didn't know what you wanted,

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it would mean that you *had* so much! . . . That you could have anything you liked to have. . . . It would mean that you had a choice among pleasant things. . . . But when you know definitely what you want, it means that there's an unpleasant alternative, don't you think so? And that very likely you'll have to take that." Anna proposed these sentiments gravely, thinking them out slowly, and a little triumphant in her conclusion. "So it is better not to know your own mind."

"But what good are the things you have, if you don't know whether you want them or not? How can you get any pleasure out of what you are, if you're not sure you wouldn't rather be something different?"

"Yes, but you can try to be different—to be what you want to be."

"Of course, if you're sure you want to be it. But there again you must know what you want. In fact, you see, you can't be anything in particular without making up your mind to it, and even then you can't unless your mind is made up for you too!"

"But it isn't necessary to be anything in particular—I mean, to do anything—in order to enjoy life, is it? And we agreed that was the best thing—to enjoy."

"I'm not sure we agreed. I've tried it, you know—I mean doing nothing——"

"But of course I didn't mean *that*! You seem to me to have done more than anybody I know, and yet you say you have only tried to enjoy life. I think that is the only way to do and be anything interesting. How can you be yourself at all if you don't do what you want?"

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"Yes—to do what you want! So we're back where we started from, aren't we?"

"I suppose so——"

"Do *you* know what you want just now?"

Anna pondered, and looked up at him with troubled, shining eyes.

"I'm—not sure I do."

"Then, according to your theory it must be because you have an embarrassment of riches to choose from."

"Oh, *no*. It isn't that," she declared positively.

"Then what becomes of your theory? You're quite wrong, you see. And meantime, here are you and I—two people with not a single mind apparently. It's distressing. I wish I could help you out. How can you expect to get what you want when you don't know——"

"I know it," she murmured with a melancholy look. "It is terrible."

"It's very unsatisfactory trusting to chance or somebody else to decide these matters. You might find out when it was too late that you had got the wrong thing, and had really known it all along——"

"Yes, I might," she nodded sadly, and suddenly he saw the tears well up in her eyes.

He was nonplussed for a moment—he had not meant his idle play to have any real personal application. But he turned it quickly.

"I'll help you to make up your mind, shall I? Tell me what you *think* you want, and I'll argue against it with all my might and main."

"Well, I *think* I want to stay in New York and study singing," said Anna with a wan smile, getting rid of the tears.

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"Oh, I've innumerable arguments against that. So many and such strong ones that if after you hear them you have the faintest desire to stay you can be quite sure you want it tremendously! But I'm afraid it's too late to begin on them now—it must be a good deal after six." He rose with some unwillingness.

"I wish—— I could ask you to dine with us. But Mr. Devin isn't here, and—and then I promised to take dinner with Mrs. O'Beirne."

A sort of panic impelled Anna to mention this. She did not know whether Purcell might not expect her to ask him to dinner—or perhaps he might be surprised if she did ask him. A moment later she regretted having put it out of her power to do so.

"Ah, then there's no hope for me," he said, and somehow he conveyed the impression of disappointment.

"But I hope I shall see you again—before I go, if I do go," she said.

"It won't be so sudden as that anyway, will it? I'm going away for a few days, but if you'll send a note to the University Club, so that I can let Walton know—that is, if you want him to write Pannier—and I hope you will want it."

"So do I," said Anna.

VIII.

WHEN Anna came back to her room about midnight, after dinner and a theatre with the O'Beirnes, she found Dan sitting in the easy-chair under the electric light, asleep. The pages of the evening newspapers were scattered on the floor. His head was bent forward, and Anna, standing near him for a moment, noticed with surprise how gray he was growing. Then she spoke to him, and he woke with a start.

"Why, Anna—you're back at last . . . I was asleep, I guess." He passed his hands over his eyes and got up wearily. "I didn't sleep much last night, and I've been waiting for you since about seven. . . ."

"Why didn't you let me know you were coming? I didn't expect you till Tuesday. I've been to dinner with the O'Beirnes. Have you had dinner?" asked Anna, taking off her hat and gloves.

"Oh, yes, I got something. I decided to come on and see you and then go back, and go West directly from Boston. I wanted to get it settled, about you . . . it worried me. . . ."

He looked tired and worried, and older, Anna thought. His hair was certainly much grayer than she had noticed it to be before; it was almost white just at the temples. And the lines about his eyes

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were more marked, showing plainly at the distance they kept from one another. He kicked the newspapers out of his way, went to the other side of the room and began walking up and down before the door.

"I got your letter—that really decided me to come," he said.

"Yes."

"It made me certain that you will not go back with me. . . ."

"I didn't mean it that way, though. I didn't say that."

"No, no . . . I know. But . . . I felt it. You must not go back."

He was not able to talk about it calmly. He caught his breath after each sentence, and his voice was harsh and strained.

"I will go if you wish it," said Anna, beginning to undress.

"If I wish it . . .! What has that got to do with it?"

"Why, I should think a good deal. I have thought it all over," said Anna, smoothing out the lace on her waist mechanically, "and I've decided I will do exactly as you say. As I wrote you, I didn't mean those things I said. I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings. And I don't want to stay, if you object to it."

"Why should I 'object'—oh, what's the use of talking," groaned Dan. "I haven't anything to say about it. We'll just consider it settled, that you stay, and . . . do as seems best to you."

"Well, I don't want it settled in that way." Anna sat down and fixed her eyes on him indignantly. "It's

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your affair as much as it is mine—almost. I don't see why you should just wash your hands of it . . . and leave it all to me. I want to agree about it. If you treat me that way, I . . . won't take any money at all. I'll get on by myself."

"Don't be foolish," said Dan sadly. "You just don't understand me. There's only one thing in the whole business that matters to me one way or the other. . . . If that was all right it wouldn't matter what you did . . . or said . . . it might hurt for a minute, but not . . . like this. It's just this——" He tried to control the twitching muscles that distorted his mouth and made it hard for him to speak. He faced her, wounded, mortally hurt. "You don't love me."

Anna looked up at him and was silent, feeling hopelessly that Dan was determined to make the breach between them worse.

Dan went on, pain clouding his eyes and breaking his voice. "I never felt it clearly, till the other night. I never felt that it was useless . . . that you couldn't . . . but now I feel it. I know it now. . . . And so everything is different. I don't know what to do. You can't be with me, because it would be too hard there . . . you would be unhappy, unless you wanted to be with me. And yet I don't know how to leave you, to let you go. . . ."

He clinched his fists and set his teeth in a vain effort at calmness. Anna sprang up and went to him and clasped her hands about the tense muscles of his arm.

"Oh, please don't," she implored. "You're all wrong. I do, I do love you. I don't know what was

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the matter with me the other night. I didn't mean what I said. Won't you forgive me, please, Dan?"

"It isn't that," he said, and she felt that he was shaking.

"You know you have often said angry things to me," she cried, "and I knew you said them in anger, and when you were sorry it was all right. . . ."

"I never said anything like that . . . but if it had been only in anger. . . . But it wasn't. You . . . you meant it. Or else when you wrote me . . . you would have showed . . . some feeling. But you have no feeling for me. Except, perhaps, you might like me a little . . . if everything went well."

Anna's hands dropped from his arm. She turned away from him.

"I don't blame you," Dan went on jerkily. "You're not to blame for . . . not loving me. It is my fault . . . something wrong in me . . . or I could have made you love me. I thought you would, when we were married. I know I made mistakes. I haven't done what I meant to do for you. . . . But I didn't mean . . . to deceive you. I didn't mean that. I tried to do what I thought would be the best thing. . . . But now perhaps I am mistaken again. As you said, I may fail . . . and you couldn't stand that, could you? . . . You can't trust me, you said . . . you don't believe I will succeed. And if not, if we were always poor, I wouldn't be anything to you . . . except a failure. . . . You would . . . hate me. It's better to know it now. Perhaps you can be happy some way after all. . . ."

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"Happy!" Anna laughed bitterly. "No, I can never be happy! You get rid of me very easily—but we'll both have to suffer for making a failure of it. You can begin over again to make money, but how can I begin over again? . . . You don't know what that means to a woman . . . I shall feel disgraced! I don't know *what* I shall do—something terrible, perhaps. You can't blame me. . . ."

They gazed at one another.

"Then," said Dan, hoarsely, "would you rather go on as we are? If so, come with me."

"It isn't necessary that I should go with you. Only that you shouldn't cast me off!" she cried. "I think we'd better be apart for a while, anyhow—after all this. But I don't want to feel that—that it is a failure. To feel that I don't belong anywhere, that nobody—nobody——" she struggled with her sobs—"Don't you see, after a while it might be different. We could be together again. What else is there?"

Dan looked at her in sad bewilderment.

"Let it be that way, then," he said finally. "I don't understand you now—but I'll agree to anything you want. I am to go, then, and you're to stay . . . for the present. . . . And we are to try and be . . . friends . . . ?"

"Yes," Anna said with great and obvious relief. "That is it. That's the best thing."

Dan took up his coat and hat, which lay on the bed, and put them on.

"Where are you going?" she said in astonishment.

"To the Turkish bath. I'm dead tired. I shall probably sleep late in the morning. I'll be here for

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lunch anyhow at one. Then we can settle the rest before I go back to Boston. Good-night, Anna."

"Good-night," she said plaintively.

She went over and kissed his cheek. Dan received the caress passively and went out, moving with the slower step and slightly bowed shoulders that seemed to show the sudden leap of age upon him.

IX.

IN effect he had lived years during the last few months. An expenditure of mental and nervous energy which each day left him practically exhausted, in spite of his strong frame, had in that time markedly lowered his vitality and increased his nervous sensitiveness. The life at Mallory had been hard; ten times harder had been his work in the East. Here the struggle to retrieve his false step, to regain independence, had reached its acute crisis. It had been intense in proportion to the issues involved, and the shortness of the time he had allowed himself. To make and lose a fortune and to win another, all in little more than a year, is a thing that in any case cannot be done cheaply. In Dan's case it required complete concentration on the one object, and the investment of every ounce of capital he possessed. That capital was his brain, his force, his hope and determination—in other words, simply his life itself. Except for this, he had gone almost bare-handed into the new enterprise, but he had thrown himself into it without reserve, and his personal force had made its success.

But this concentration, this abandon to his idea, had made him peculiarly susceptible and left him defenceless against the blow that had now fallen on him. In his position he absolutely needed freedom

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of mind, aside from his business. He needed emotional peace and repose, to rest simply on a love that understood, that made few demands, that gave itself freely. Absorbed in a task whose full difficulty and hardship none could know except himself, he needed to feel that this absorption was being counted for and not against him. If Anna could have answered these demands on her—and they were not small—she might have eased incalculably the strain upon him.

But now that strain was increased almost to the breaking-point. Suddenly he had been put upon the defensive, and he could not defend himself. The surprise was complete; he felt himself routed, beaten, so utterly overthrown that there was nothing for it but unconditional surrender—in the moment, too, when all his thoughts had been of victory.

Victory, to be sure, in another field; but in the same cause. Dan had taken it for granted that his wife was with him in his fight; that she understood it was for her more than for himself that he was fighting; that she would rejoice with him in any success, even though she offered no definite consolation in the event of failure.

But now, it seemed, in trying to get for her, in the shortest possible time, the things on which she set her desire, he had lost her. The task presented to him now was to win again what he had thought already his; to lay siege to his wife's heart; to make her so completely his that no division like this would be possible again between them; to make her accept him once for all, with all his limitations, lacks and faults; to make her love him.

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And he knew it was impossible. Between the lover of a year ago and himself to-day was an impassable distance. He loved Anna all the more because she was the only being he loved. But few men can have made more completely the transition from lover to husband; can have exercised more freely the marital right to take things for granted, and to expect one's self to be taken for granted. And now, this position being utterly overturned, he felt simply that he was betrayed, that events had betrayed him, had confounded all his expectations, and that it was impossible to alter the result. He could not sue again for Anna's love. It was his right; for, after all, he had been loyal to her, and he had done what seemed best to him in her interest, even in his Californian speculations and in the subsequent necessary sacrifices, for which she now so bitterly reproached him.

It was the crushing misfortune of that loss in California that it had swept away, at a blow, everything that might have reconciled Anna to the inevitable change, inevitably hard to a woman, especially so to a vain woman, in Dan. To lose at once lover, house, position, ease, family ties, receiving in exchange a husband at a distance and certain doubtful prospects, might have tried a stronger soul than hers. Dan had not even yet counted the whole cost of his lost venture, which meant the loss of her faith in him. He did not know yet what it would cost him to give Anna up—he could not know until he had tried to supply the void that her loss would leave in his life. For practically she represented to him not only what he knew of woman, but all relief to the simple bare purpose of his daily life. If he could not woo her

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back again, still less could he woo any other woman. As for what women could give him unsought, unasked, he naïvely despised it, though he might take it, and despised them for giving. No man could feel more deeply the value of love; imaginatively he had felt it, had lifted it reverently far above the things of the world and the flesh. Permanence seemed to him of its essence, and charity also. It must be eternal, long-suffering and forgiving, for was it not, in this world, the one thing divine?

And in his simple creed, to love and to be faithful was to deserve love. Fidelity too was a thing of the spirit, not to be affected by distance, time, or, in the case of faulty man, by momentary amours. In this spirit he had been faithful to Anna, and would be while he lived; for no other woman could take her place, even though she rejected him. Nor, in his bewildered thoughts, did he blame her for so doing. It was simply a misfortune that fell on her as well as himself. It was a cruel fate that had turned his own efforts against himself, that had misled him, led him somehow to injure her and their life together. In his grief there was no room for resentment.

Instinctively Dan was a fatalist. By inheritance, too, he was a Puritan. The world had never seemed to him made for joy, but for struggle; the end of man was not enjoyment but work. In his heart, even when he was happiest, he had denied happiness. Always he had acknowledged the existence of a power outside himself which might at any moment range itself against him, and baffle or crush him. Ambitious lives near to him he had seen go down before these sledge-hammer blows of the invisible force. It

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was partly this fatalism which blunted the tooth of regret for his own previous failures: he had done his best, the event was beyond him.

Now he bowed his head to the inevitable. He had done his best: but Anna was lost to him.

His intuition was right. Effort would have been vain. From the moment that Anna's dissatisfaction with him was crystallized, fixed by comparison of him with another man, she was already in spirit faithless to him. But Dan did not suspect the reason of her definite change. On the surface, her acquaintance with Purcell was too slight to warrant suspicion in a mind so little inclined to it as his. Once for all he had placed Anna in the category of good women. A good woman, once for all, was above temptation; above the vulgarity of flirtation, as well as the darker faults. It was unthinkable that a virtuous woman could descend from her august station, could cross the hard-and-fast line separating her from the frail sisterhood lightly spoken of, lightly esteemed. If a woman was not chaste she was nothing in Dan's view; she had no claim, except perhaps on pity that was more contempt. She deserved the brand of the scarlet letter, deserved the social stoning. In something the same way, though not so strongly—for the special faults of men, as being more in line with their original nature, impressed him less than the fall of women—Dan felt toward drunkenness. His kindly nature had its harsh side—it was puritanically intolerant of the weaknesses of the flesh.

And though it had not occurred to him to suspect Anna or to be jealous of Nicholas Purcell, in one way their acquaintance had troubled him deeply. When

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he was able to think at all he thought of her, and of the dangers that must surround her when she was left alone in the city. Purcell suggested one of these dangers. It was obvious that Anna could not escape attention and admiration—she was too beautiful. She was good and innocent, but her very virtues and attractions would make it harder for her. Her innocence might be taken advantage of. She was totally ignorant of the world; and it was very probable that she was wrong and he right in thinking Purcell's conduct, in the affair of the dinner, doubtful. Dan's mind was by no means at ease on the point, and he meant to have it settled, and if need be, to call Purcell to account. What he knew of Purcell's character was decidedly against him. Purcell was an idler, living on the earnings of better men, corrupted by the decaying civilizations of Europe—it was inevitable he should be vicious, unscrupulous. No doubt he was un-American enough to take advantage of a woman for his own amusement. But if it proved that he had offered Anna any disrespect. . . .

Dan clinched his fists and rage flamed up in his face as his solitary meditations reached this stage. Immediately afterward he resolved to consult Flora O'Beirne. She knew the world at large, and New York in particular. She would advise him as to a boarding-place for Anna, and would also, he was sure, engage to help Anna in any possible way. And she could doubtless settle that other point for him—if he decided to ask her.

After his late breakfast he telephoned and found that Mrs. O'Beirne was in and would see him with pleasure; and accordingly went around to her hotel

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at once. She took him into a corner of the big old-fashioned parlor, and he found it easy to tell her of Anna's plans for the winter. Flora was ready and resourceful.

"Of course I can find a place for her. It would be hard if I didn't know a little about New York, after all the weary time I've spent here. Boarding-houses, yes, I know dozens of 'em—all kinds. The sort where you have references, and the sort where you have ructions. Exclusive and quite otherwise, oh dear, yes. I lived in a theatrical boarding-house once, for two weeks, taking care of a little friend of mine who was ill—well, we don't want *that* kind, of course. I know exactly the sort—quiet, not too expensive, and she'll want to have a piano and practise, of course. I'll go and see Miss Thaw, a friend of mine. She is a dear, and has the nicest place, for the money. *We'd* go to her, except that she doesn't take transients, and you know we're nothing if not transient. But the only difficulty, if she *has* a room, would be the piano. Her whole second floor has been let for years to an old lady who won't have a child, an English-woman, a dog or a piano in the house. However, we'll see—I haven't seen her for a year, and things may be different now."

Flora chattered partly out of desire to dissemble her feelings. At first glance the change in Dan had struck her, and each moment made her more certain that something was wrong. She did not fail to put two and two together, and the sum of her mental calculations was that Anna's disturbance of the past day or so, Dan's miserable looks, and the sudden decision of the couple to part, had a common and a serious

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cause. Her heart leapt instantly to Dan's side of the trouble, whatever it might be.

"You're very kind," he said gratefully. "You take a big load off my mind. If she could only be in a place that would be a little home-like—you know what I mean. . . ."

"Yes, of course—where some real interest would be taken in her—where she won't be treated as a mere machine that you feed meat and bread and that returns dollars! Oh, I know. There's nothing in life so lonesome as a typical boarding-house in a big city. But if Mary Thaw can take her, it will be all right. She'll feel almost at home. Mary will do that much for me any day."

"If only you were going to be in New York," said Dan with the moody look that was new to him. "You would look after her a little, wouldn't you?"

"That I would, as much as she'd let me! And I will, Dan, whenever I am here. I know how you feel about leaving her. But if she has her work she won't be so lonely. And then she'll find other things. And it won't be long—you'll be here off and on, probably, on business, won't you? It will really be much easier for her than trailing about after you—and perhaps for you, too."

"Yes, perhaps so," he said sombrely. "But she's so young, and—— she's attractive, you see. And she doesn't know the world—— It's that part of it that worries me."

"Oh, I wouldn't worry! She strikes me as very well able to take care of herself, really. She doesn't seem at all impulsive, feather-headed—quite the contrary. I thought her unusually—well, level-headed."

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"Well, but she doesn't *know*," returned Dan, showing some irritation.

He pushed back his chair, and walked across the room and back. Already, it seemed to him, the refreshing effect of his night's rest was wearing off. He was conscious of an extreme nervous irritability. Flora's well-intentioned ease grated on him.

Flora was quick enough to see that she had taken the wrong tone. She cast away pretence. She put out her hand, took Dan's and drew him down into his chair, regardless of some people at the other end of the room. Lowering her voice she said earnestly:

"Tell me anything you can, my dear, and if there's anything on earth I can do to help you, you won't need to ask twice. It cuts me to the heart to see you look like this. Sorrow to those that have brought sorrow on you!"

"No . . . don't say that. It is my fault, not anybody else's, in the beginning. I see that now, and it's what hurts the most. I can't tell you all . . . it wouldn't do any good. But . . . but . . . she will be all alone, do you see? And she is not happy, either. Will you help her, what you can?"

"I will, Dan, for your sake. For I tell you honestly I don't believe for a minute that you're to blame, no matter what has happened."

"But," said he, touched and yet alarmed by her evident feeling, "if you take it that way you can't do *her* any good. She will see, she will think I have told you. . . . And I had better tell you the whole thing now, so that you can see for yourself it is not her fault."

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"Well, if you think it will have that effect—for, frankly, knowing no more of you two than I do now, I can't help but blame her."

What Dan had to tell, beginning with their losses in California and ending with Anna's dislike for the Wyoming prospect with its unsettled conditions, was told as nearly as possible from Anna's point of view. He did not wish at all to exculpate himself, he was concerned only to make out Anna's case so that no injustice should be done her; and to avoid touching on what could not be explained away, her lack of feeling.

It cannot be said that he achieved his object. His simple confession of his own shortcomings and errors merely confirmed Flora unalterably in her conviction that the real fault lay elsewhere. Anna's unlovingness was too apparent in the bare facts of the case. And to Flora's emotional nature, counting love worth any sacrifice and the ample reward of any, counting it too the highest duty especially of a woman, and her greatest right, Anna stood thereby condemned.

But if Dan did not touch on that side of it, neither could she. And so she simply said when he had ended:

"I understand. No one knows better than I do, Dan, the hardship of uncertainty and violent changes to most women. We're made that way—I suppose for some good end."

He got up to go immediately, and asked Flora to come and lunch with Anna and himself, and afterward to guide them in their search for a domicile. She had arranged previously to lunch with her hus-

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band, but agreed to the latter part of the programme, adding that, as she had an hour or so to spare, she would go to see Mary Thaw immediately.

When the Colonel appeared at one o'clock, Flora poured out to him all her repressed indignation on Dan's behalf—she had no secrets from her husband, not even the secrets of her friends.

"And so she leaves him simply because he can't make money fast enough, though, poor boy, he's working himself to death," she cried.

"Ah, you're always hard on the women, especially the pretty ones," said the Colonel easily. "And I shouldn't wonder, Flo, if you wasted more sympathy on the men than they deserve. You've fallen in love again, and that's the truth, confess it."

"Better so than to have a heart like a stone," said the lady. "If you love one, you love more, and that's the truth. It's just a habit. But it's a habit *she* never had. For all her pretty face I wouldn't give *that* for her," a snap of the fingers. "And yet here I've been talking to Mary Thaw about her as if she was my bosom friend, getting Mary to give her the back parlor in her new house for two dollars a week less than regular rates, and to try and be a mother to her to boot. And it's a job *I* wouldn't undertake, I can tell you, unless for the pleasure of telling her what I think of her."

With this help of Flora's, the question was very quickly settled that afternoon. After inspecting it with Dan, Anna agreed to take Miss Thaw's back parlor. She went back to the hotel and packed all her belongings. The next day she would see Herr Pannier, and arrange about renting a piano. Dan

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could feel when he left for Boston, not to return to New York probably for many months, that she was practically settled, and as comfortably so as possible in the circumstances.

They were to dine together for the last time that evening.

In silence, after the little room in which they had lived so long was dismantled and the keys given up, they left the hotel, which was beginning to be gay again with the first hint of winter life. Anna uttered a mental prayer that she might never see it again.

They walked down the Avenue slowly. It was a crisp bright evening, with a red glow in the west, and a new moon already sinking. The street too looked gay and alive. Its line of lights and those of the side streets, twinkling in the moving air, had a festive suggestion, leading into the constellated district of the cafés and theatres, whose season was already well begun.

"Can you remember where you went that night with—Purcell?" asked Dan suddenly. "We might try that place for a change."

Anna was startled.

"We've passed the street, I think," she said. "It was only two or three blocks from the hotel. I don't remember exactly the street."

"Well, do you know the name of the place?"

"No. It was kept by a Frenchman."

With this information to go upon, it was some time before they found the place. There was a good deal of walking up and down side-streets and of inquiring by the way, for its fame was by no means spread

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abroad. But Dan was determined to find it, and he did. Anna did not oppose him, though she would have preferred a place with music and something to look at, in the circumstances.

When they entered there were two other couples, one in each room, obviously intent on something besides dining. Anna sat down at a table near the one which she had occupied with Purcell, choosing her place so that she could see the other people in the front room. After taking off her coat and gloves she proceeded to study these people, while Dan, in the generous interval afforded them, was also keenly and generally observant.

The lady at the other table sat with her back to them, but Anna had glanced at her face as they came in. She judged her to be about thirty; she was rather handsome, very well and quietly dressed in black. Her companion was a man perhaps a year or so younger, with a well-formed though heavy face, fresh and smooth-shaven, and large blue eyes that were expressionless, except when he looked at the lady. Anna was so interested in his looks and the tone of his low responses to the lady's quick nervous sentences, also subdued in tone, that she did not notice the length of time they waited; but Dan became impatient and rapped his glass with his knife, a habit she disliked.

The peremptory sound disturbed that atmosphere of leisurely enjoyment. The man at the other table glanced at them again, this time with a shade of amused irritation in his indolent face; and when Monsieur Chapuis appeared, a moment or so later, to bring the first-comers their fish, Anna thought his

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smile and bow, directed to her table, expressed a slight reproach.

When he was at liberty to attend them, the host began suavely in French to offer a suggestion for the dinner. Dan cut him short with a request for the bill of fare. One was produced, and at another time Dan would have been irritated to find that it was in French and that no prices were given. But now he threw it aside contemptuously, and with a reference to Anna, ordered soup, "any kind you have ready, a good thick steak, rare, some salad, and a bottle of claret. And hurry up that soup, will you, waiter?" he called after the host as he departed. Poor Monsieur Chapuis put an unwonted ironical dignity into his bow.

Again Anna met the glance of the big-eyed man. This time he was more irritated than amused. Still looking at her, he made a brief remark to his vis-à-vis, with an annoyed and supercilious curl of his thick lips. Anna flushed, and herself felt deeply annoyed. It irritated her that Dan could not feel, as she did, the un-American charm of the little place, and adapt his manners to its character. But nothing was further from Dan's mind than adapting himself. Having finished his inspection, he brusquely disapproved that character, and his deep voice was very audible as he said:

"Well, I can't see much in this place. Pretty poor, I call it. Any chop-house would give you better food too, I don't doubt."

A certain dry hostility in his tone was due to the fact that he was condemning Purcell's choice, and Anna so understood it. But in her unqualified and

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deepening preference for Purcell's ideas and ways, she could not trust herself to dispute with Dan any point involving them.

Their dinner was a very silent one, and it was not a very good one. Rare steaks were not in Monsieur Chapuis' line, and his idea of rareness did not correspond with Dan's. Result, a slating for that unfortunate artist.

Dan showed, in these circumstances, at his worst. His temper, always quick, and now exasperated by suffering, was scarcely within his control. His nerves were sorely tried by the long deadly silences that followed his brief remarks to Anna and her constrained answers; by the sight of her downcast, unresponsive face; by the waits between the courses of their unsatisfactory meal; perhaps by the proximity of that pair of lovers, with their low talk and absorption in one another. A terrible ache was at his heart; pain sometimes gripped him by the throat. While he was berating the pale, agitated host, he could scarcely keep from crying aloud with misery, from hurling himself blindly forth, to do bodily harm to the first being that crossed his path. It was not to be supposed that the social perceptions which Dan had never cultivated could serve him now.

He paid the bill under protest and they departed, Anna vowing with tears in her eyes never to confront Monsieur Chapuis again. It seemed to be fated that each place where of late she had been with Dan should be closed to her by unpleasant memories.

They walked east—four long blocks through the heart of the city's night-life, just beginning to stir—and found themselves within a few doors of Anna's

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new home. It was necessary to consult a memorandum of the number which she had made in order to identify the house, one in a row of exactly similar design. Dan took her keys and opened the front door, and the door of her room. It was rather a large room, its length being the width of the house, and it had two long windows opening on the back yard, which contained a tree and a grass-plot. There was an open fire, burning cheerily, and when the gas was turned up, Anna beheld her trunk already delivered, and on that article of furniture which was by night a bed and by day apparently a book-case, a large cluster of red roses.

"Oh, see!" she cried. Then reading the card that lay near the vase, "Mrs. O'Beirne. Isn't that nice of her! It looks quite cosy, doesn't it?"

And she glanced round her new domain and then at Dan, nervously. He was standing, with his coat on, his hat in his hand.

"Yes, it looks comfortable," he said mechanically.

"Won't you sit down?" she asked, laughing a little, and going to take his coat from him.

Dan shook his head.

"No, I must get along—my train—have some things to do——"

They looked at one another. And this was to be good-by! It seemed absurd, to both of them, really incredible.

"You will write often, won't you?" said Anna in a trembling voice. "Tell me about—the railroad and everything. And I will try—not to be a burden—I mean I think I can get a church-position. . . . And I will work hard. . . ."

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"Oh, that's all right," muttered Dan. "You must let me know how you get on." He took a roll of bills from his pocket and gave her three hundred dollars. "That's for the first month and—incidentals. You think two hundred a month will be enough?"

"Oh, plenty. I will be very careful. And I don't think I'll need that much long."

Dan looked round the room again vaguely.

"Well . . . I must go," he said again, with a sharp effort.

Anna approached him.

"Good-by," she said tearfully. "You will write often, won't you? And I suppose you'll be here again before long, won't you?"

"Yes, I may be."

"And take care of yourself, won't you . . . ?"

"Oh, yes."

Anna offered a caress, and he kissed her cheek brusquely. Then he turned toward the door. Anna followed, clinging to his hand.

"Good-by," she sobbed, the tears on her cheeks.

Dan nodded, keeping his face turned away from her as he went out.

X.

ALL that was left him now was the great cause, sign and conservator of middle-age—the love of work. In his Boston office he found work piled up for him, and he plunged into it with an energy that left no time for brooding. Boston, city of enthusiasms, was in the throes of her brief copper boom; and the harvest poured in on the happy holders of copper stocks. Mallory stock had sold out the first two blocks offered, and was now selling at par. Dan's commission on the sales already mounted up handsomely. He was in constant telegraphic communication with Grand at River City; and his reports of the present and forecasts of the future were glowing as ever. For when happiness left him and all lightness of heart, he kept himself going by sheer dogged devotion to the work he had in hand; and this devotion at least was not wasted.

Josiah Purcell, now a large stockholder in Mallory, and spending a good deal of time in the office, observed the change in Dan's looks in shrewd silence. He knew, no one better, the cost of such inevitable physical over-drafts as Dan obviously had been making. His own early years of business struggle had bequeathed him a nervous dyspepsia, which all his years of leisure he had been trying to cure. But he hoped, for all kinds of reasons, that Devin was not going to break down.

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Josiah Purcell was immensely interested in the railroad scheme. Having put a good deal of money into Mallory, he was determined that Mallory should pay. And without having been on the ground, he was convinced by Dan's array of facts and figures, that the railroad was the way to make it pay, on a scale attractive to the millionaire.

Their first interview in Dan's private room—a little place partitioned off from the main office—mainly concerned the affairs and prospects of the Mallory company. In Dan's absence Purcell was to have the real charge of the Boston end, though there was a nominal agent.

"You'll be getting off in a day or so, I suppose," said the elder man, as they went out to lunch together.

"Day after to-morrow, I think."

"Go straight West?"

"I think so. There's nothing that needs to take me to New York again. And you know every day counts now out there. I don't want some of those fellows to come nosing round and spoil my work for me."

Purcell understood this cryptic reference to the railroad, but postponed discussion of the subject most in the minds of both, till they had pushed their way along the narrow sidewalk, jammed with its noontime hungry hurrying crowds, and had found a table in a hotel café. Dan could not discover much appetite.

"Oh, bring me a mutton-chop and a Scotch high-ball, and bring the high-ball right away," he said listlessly.

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Josiah Purcell consumed much more time and care in ordering; his drink was malted milk. He said to Dan: "Wait till you get to my age. You'll be living on gruel. Do you know that a man works on his stomach? Yes, sir, and that's the first place that overwork hits you. You look to me as if you'd been hit lately. Been eating well?"

"Oh, well enough—about as usual," Dan drank off half his whiskey and water.

"It's years since I touched any of that stuff," said Purcell. "I found out that I was beginning to like it, and I stopped."

"I haven't begun to like it yet. When I do I'll stop."

"Well, how do you live out there, anyway? Do you get well taken care of—home living?"

"No—not exactly. Lived on canned goods when I was there, mostly—it did play the mischief with me, that's a fact."

"Of course it did. I knew well enough what ailed you. Couldn't you get anything else?"

"No, not there. It'll be a shade better at River City, where my head-quarters will be this winter probably. There's a fair hotel there."

"Hotel?" said Purcell, his sharp old face showing some concern. "I thought you'd be living in a place of your own. Tell the truth, I was counting on boarding with you while I'm out there. Deliver me from Western hotels—and a mining-town hotel——! Why, my dear fellow, you'll be a wreck by spring—what with fried meat, canned vegetables, biscuits and preserves—heaven help us!"

"Oh, it isn't as bad as that," said Dan carelessly.

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"Well, what does your wife say? I shouldn't think that plan would suit her. Now my wife never would board. She wanted her own house, but, to tell the truth, she wasn't a housekeeper. She was a smart woman and a good woman, and I don't say a word against her—but she wasn't brought up to go into the kitchen and see that things were *right*, and—well, I've got some troubles to show for it. You see, when you're going ahead full steam on, bound to break a record or burst, you've got to be well *stoked*. That's what I say—it's the stomach that counts in the long run, and the women ought to look to that part of it—a man hasn't time to think about what he's eating." And the old man's choleric eyes snapped as he sipped his milk.

Dan nodded and began to talk about the railroad. Their plans had been previously settled except as to a few details. The thing that lay ahead of Dan now was to get the traffic agreement from the Union Pacific people. He already had the right of way secured. Josiah Purcell now announced his intention of going out to Wyoming some time the next month.

"The fact is, I haven't got a blamed thing to do here," he confessed. "And I want to get into things again. My daughter wants me to come up to the place on the Hudson, but bless you, there's nothing up there but horses, riding round in automobiles and playing one kind of game or another. Vaughan is a great sportsman, you see. And my daughter wants to coddle me, make me sit by the chimney-corner and act the doting grandfather. But I'm not quite in my dotage yet. How old do you think I am?"

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"Sixty," said Dan, subtracting a few years.

"Sixty-five, sir. When I'm at work, I'm about fifty, and when I'm doing nothing but nurse my health, eighty at least. That's one reason I want to work. But not to overwork. You've been running things rather too hard, it strikes me. Why, you look ten years older than when I first saw you."

"Do I? How old do I look?" Dan asked absently.

"Well, forty-two or three."

"Then I *have* gained ten years—or lost them. . . . But now about that option on Graham's land. It expires on the tenth, and from private advices I have I think he won't renew it except at a higher price. We'll have to buy that in, I expect. . . ."

And the talk went back to the road.

When Dan returned to his office he found in his mail a letter from Mrs. Vaughan, enclosing her check for the hundred shares of stock she had taken, and inviting him to come up to Lenox over the next Saturday and Sunday.

Dan immediately wrote to acknowledge the check and decline the invitation, on the ground that he was leaving for the West.

Then before ending the letter he threw himself back in his chair and thought for a few moments, with the slight frown that was becoming habitual, and finally added this paragraph:

"You spoke of calling on my wife, and I know she will be very glad to have you. She is to spend the winter in New York studying music," he gave Anna's address, "and if you could show her any attention—" here he paused, thinking that this sounded too much like a business letter of introduction, but in despair

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of a better phrase he ended, "it would be a very great favor to me. Yours very truly, Daniel Devin."

He could scarcely have told himself the exact motive for the request, which was certainly inconsistent with what he had said to Anna about Mrs. Vaughan and "her sort." It was partly, no doubt, Anna's wish to know Mrs. Vaughan and his own feeling that any acquaintance would relieve her lonely situation; partly, in an obscure way, some feeling about Nicholas Purcell. Dan's visit at the restaurant had given no more definite form to his doubts, but neither had it dispelled them. He did not see how he could call Nicholas to account for taking Anna there—but at the same time there was a dull uneasiness in his mind about the whole thing. And he had a vague impression that if Anna knew Purcell's sister, she would be in a safer position.

But if he could have foreseen the impression his letter was to make, probably he would not have sent it. Margaret Vaughan read it, broke into a shout of laughter, and took it in to read to George.

"Isn't he quaint!" she cried delightedly. "I ask him up here, and he recommends his wife. Oh, I *am* sorry now he can't come—he is such a character!"

George declined to regret the event.

"You think any bore is a character," he complained mildly. "I like people without characters best."

"Well, I'm sure none of your friends have any," returned Margaret. But her tone was meditative. She re-read the letter, and then cried suddenly, "I know now why Nick telegraphed!"

"Didn't know he had. Is he coming?"

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"No, no, stupid, I mean about the music-teacher—don't you see? It was for *her* he wanted to find out. I've no doubt she's his latest crush."

"Who is?"

"Why, 'my wife'—Mrs. Devin. Show her some attention? Of course I will. I always like to know Nick's flames."

Margaret, by dint of an exceeding attentiveness to any sign of interest between a man and a woman, and a habit of jumping to a conclusion when the slightest sign could be discovered, was very often right; since the kind of thing she was interested in has a habit of occurring.

It was inevitable now that she should be really interested in Anna. For besides curiosity she had the motive of a strong love for her brother. Margaret was always rather relieved when Nick's Platonic fancy lighted on a married woman; for though she often told him he ought to marry, she secretly dreaded the day when he should fall really in love. A radical in her own procedure, she was conservative when it came to the affairs of her men-folk. She thought they were very well off as they were, but she distrusted emotions for Nick more than she did business ventures for her father. Falling in love was simply taking the biggest of all risks, and a deliberate invitation to bankruptcy. Margaret had taken that risk and on the whole had come out well; but nevertheless she had the natural view of other people's love-plunges, as probable calamities—for them.

Nick, she considered, had taken the best means of insuring himself against anything of that kind, by an infinite number of interests in women. He had

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never got into scrapes, he had never hurt himself or anybody else. Nevertheless, Margaret now regarded each new interest with some uneasiness, very marked if it concerned a girl. For he was approaching the dangerous age of thirty, when permanence and monotony begin to charm the errant masculine fancy; and when, propinquity assisting, a man will commonly fall in love if he is going to do it at all. And he had lately given definite signs of settling down. He was tired of living abroad, and interested in his own country. He was vaguely tired of doing nothing, and was even talking of going into the law. He was tired of wandering, and he had said that he wanted a home. Yes, certainly, he was ready to fall in love. But Nick was not a violent or a very emotional person. It was of course possible, but it was not likely, that he would be deeply attracted by a woman who was not free to marry him. That would be against the whole tenor of his easy uncombative life and disposition, so unlike Margaret's own.

Therefore she took the affair that she had imagined for him with Anna Devin rather lightly, as another example of Platonic homœopathy.

It was doubtless a Platonic scene that Dan interrupted, two days later—though just at first blush it did not make exactly that impression on him.

He had decided, after all, to stop at New York on his way west—for unreasoned reasons that took him straight to Anna's door. His ring was answered by a neat maid, who said Mrs. Devin was in; indeed from the hall Dan could hear Anna's voice, thrilling out in one of those plaintive ballads he had liked. He

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gave his name and said he would go directly in. There was no waiting-room in the house, the front parlor being let to a dentist.

He opened the door very softly, not to interrupt the song; and it was a decided shock to him to see, outlined against the fading daylight of the window, the head and shoulders of a man lounging in a low chair. Purcell, seeing him, rose quietly and came to shake hands; and as Anna's voice sank on the last low notes of the song she heard the murmur of his voice and turned sharply round.

She was in her blue dress, with a bunch of violets at her waist; her face was bright with color—she was adorably pretty. Dan saw all that in the instant before she came and drew him into the room and took his hat, crying out, with a deepening of her rosy bloom,

"Well, this is a surprise! I didn't know you meant to come over again."

"I didn't either, till this morning," he said, with a manner somewhat dry.

"Sit down," said Anna impartially, trying not to seem embarrassed. "I was just trying my new piano. I like the tone very well. And I like Herr Pannier too. I had my first lesson to-day."

"That's good," said Dan mechanically.

He took off his coat and sat down; and Purcell, resuming his chair, met amiably Dan's direct look and abrupt remark:

"I saw your father just before I left Boston. He is planning to come out to Wyoming—I suppose we shall see him there next month."

Dan had no object in imparting this information

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except to speak to Purcell on a more remote theme than Anna had suggested.

"Really, is he?" said Nicholas. "I find it difficult to keep up with him nowadays. Won't it be rather a hard trip for him? It's a rough country, isn't it?"

"Oh, rough—that depends. You would think so, very likely. Your father will be able to stand a month of it very well, I think. He has had some little experience in roughing it, he tells me."

"It's true I haven't had much," said Nicholas smiling. "I belong to a useless generation, as you probably know. But it's a question, don't you think, where the responsibility lies? For example, if my forefathers hadn't worked so hard I might be working harder."

But Dan was in no mood for easy generalities, nor to be drawn out on any subject.

"Possibly," he said curtly. "But in that case you would probably blame them because you had to work. The last generation is always wrong."

"I had an idea it was the present one. At least the last generation thinks this one is wrong, you must admit that."

"Oh, I'll admit it. They haven't much in common."

It was as the representative of that elder generation that Dan spoke, and as such Purcell took him. There was not five years' difference in their ages, but in their point of view there was the difference of a lifetime. Dan now had definitely identified himself with middle-age and its outlook on the shady side of life; he had definitely renounced the badge of youth, its confidence of joy to come, and the look of it had gone from his

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face. Instead were the deep marks of experience, and a certain hardening which expressed absorption in a narrow groove of thought and feeling, and indifference to all else. Dan's was now not an emotional face—it was rather a record of emotions lived through.

Purcell, interested in his look, and for many reasons in the man himself, would have been glad to establish a common ground on which they might meet in some way; but Dan's manner was forbidding. Purcell felt himself one too many in this unexpected encounter, and with some regret he rose to go. His move relieved what was to Anna a very unpleasant situation. She had sat silent on the piano-stool, folding and unfolding a sheet of music, during that brief exchange of sentences, that confronting, on Dan's part hostile, of the two men. She knew Dan disliked Purcell and that he must dislike to find him with her: she feared that he would show his feeling in some unforgivable way. But Purcell got out of the room with the conventions intact. Dan got up and shook hands with him, and even echoed his wish that they might see one another again. Anna shook hands with him too, and it was quite understood that they would see one another again. And so he went away.

The daylight had quite faded out now. Anna lit the gas. Dan, looking out into the little garden where the straggling vines had showed lines of red against the high fence, and the tree was shedding its yellow leaves, was vaguely sorry that she had done so. It had been in his mind that he wished she would go on singing "Ye Banks and Braes of Bonnie Doon," and that he might sit in the dusk and listen for a little,

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resting, half-dreaming, as he had used to do ages ago. But now she did not sing to him, but for that other man. Anna spoke nervously.

"So you found after all you could stop here again."

A silence. "Yes," said Dan heavily. "I wanted to open a bank account for you, and I thought I might as well see——"

"I'm glad you could come. You can see how comfortable I shall be. Everything is very nice."

Silence.

"Won't you sit down? You'll stay to dinner with me here, won't you? I should like it."

Dan stood pressing his forehead hard against the cool glass, his hands clinched down in his pockets. Should he let himself go, just this once? Should he give free vent to all those wild thoughts that were crowding his brain, break through the restraints that he had put on himself and that hurt and chafed and tormented him? His head seemed whirling. In a flash he felt that it was not a question whether he should break out, but whether he could help doing it. Anna's touch on his arm was the last straw. He flung it off and turned round on her.

"Why do you have that fellow here?" he demanded with an ominous look.

"Why—why shouldn't I, if I like to?"

"Why should you? Why should he be here, in your room, in the dark—you singing to him——"

"Dan! It isn't true. 'In the dark!' How—dare you——" Anna choked with the ready tears of anger.

"It was so. Do you mean to say you would have had him here if you'd known I was coming? You

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thought I was safely away and you could do what you liked. But I never thought that I couldn't trust you."

"Trust me? What do you mean? I have never done or said anything that you could blame me for—never. You are simply crazy. I asked him in here because there is no parlor—it is all right to do it—nobody would know this isn't a parlor. Do you mean I am not to see a soul—no one——"

"I mean you're not to have a fellow like that hanging round when I'm not here to look after him—a fellow that has nothing to do but follow women. What do you know of him or his kind? What do you think he comes here for?"

"He comes because he is friendly to me. Because I like him."

"Yes, exactly. But you can't have that kind of 'friends.' I know well enough where that ends, if you don't. You'd find out soon enough. Take my word for it and stop it now."

"I won't take your word, because you haven't the slightest idea of what you're talking about. I know him better than you do."

"That's nonsense. You don't know anything about men, or the world. That's exactly what I've been afraid of, all along. This can't go on."

They both spoke now with a measure of calmness; they seemed to be reasoning with one another. But behind this show of reason swelled a confused feeling, on Anna's side of rage against Dan; on his side of rage against everything but her. That defiant, wrong-headed, absurd innocence of hers disarmed him. It was true that he could not long blame her. All the

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more reason why he should protect her, even against herself, even though she resented his action. It was hard that he could not do that without rousing her resentment. And it was very bitter that they should quarrel now, at this last moment, when he had hoped in spite of himself for some sort of reconciliation, for some change—though he could not tell how it was to come—in the situation, in Anna herself. In that forlorn hope he had come—that is, he had come simply because he could not help it.

“Do you mean,” said Anna, her voice trembling, “that you forbid me to let him come here.”

“I mean . . . that I want you to see it as I do . . . that it is foolish. . . .”

“I can’t see anything as you do, we might as well settle that. I only want to know if you mean to . . . try to prevent me from doing as I wish, from having the little pleasure that I *can* have . . . because if you do”

“Well, if I do, what then?”

Anna might justly think from his manner that he was determined to make the worst of the situation, that he was angry with her, determined to put her in the wrong. His look, his voice, were hard and harsh from emotion which could hardly be accounted for by the simple fact of Purcell’s visit.

“I mean to do as I like, that is all. I won’t be treated like a child or a fool,” she cried. “I will have what visitors I choose. You have no right to forbid me. I won’t bear it. You try to take away everything I care about, everything that interests me. . . .”

“Do you care about him?” asked Dan heavily.

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"I didn't say that. I like him, and he is the only interesting person I know. And now for no reason you . . ."

She stopped, in tears again, and covered her face with her hands. All this time they had been standing, but now Dan turned away and threw himself into the wicker chair.

"If you try to do that," Anna burst out in a strangled voice, "I shall just hate you. You can take away the money, and I will live somehow, by myself, I don't care how! I would rather live on bread and water and be free, than . . . than . . ."

She made a desperate effort, checked her sobs, and turning her back on Dan stood looking out blindly into the dark garden, twisting her handkerchief round her fingers.

There was a long silence.

Dan knew already that he was beaten. He had taken up and tried to defend an untenable position, and by the laws of war he deserved no mercy. And it was war between them still, that was the bewildering, terrible fact. He had no control over Anna, even for her own good, but she had the heaviest of advantages over him and she used it mercilessly. She could safely defy him, knowing well that there was nothing he feared more than that harm should come to her. She knew well that he could no more "take away the money" than he could deliberately forsake her; that in fact he could do nothing.

He was back again, up against the blank wall that mocked his strength. He had no hold over Anna; he might watch her drifting into danger, unable to prevent or help her. Her monumental indifference

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to him blocked every path. She did not need him, she was happier without him, already she had supplied his place, in a way. She would easily supply it altogether; she would be easily taken from him altogether, if she loved someone else—and she might love anybody but him.

[It was just that stony fact, that he had come to dash himself against once more. He loved her, and she did not want him. No one could understand a thing like that—no one could tell how to meet it. And no more could she understand him. She was setting herself against him, preparing to hate him; while he sat dumb with the pitiful anguish of the rejected. There was war indeed between them; but [it was because he had fought for what she had denied him; still fought for it, though he had known long before the thing was hopeless. And now every nerve in his body cried out for what she alone could give him, and would never give him. And he must go away with a longing never to be satisfied, with a pain never to be subdued.

As he sat quiet, shading his eyes with his hand, for long moments he was possessed by the desire to end her life and his. To kill himself would be too easy, but it would be a cowardly thing to shirk what responsibility she had left him. But if she died too, in some quick way, all would be ended. There would be peace, and if by chance there were any future penalty to pay, it could not be worse than this.

He laughed aloud.

“Do you know what I was thinking about?” he said, getting up. He threw his head back and looked

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at her with a reckless flash of his blue eyes that revived a suggestion of youth.

"No, what?" she responded icily.

"That it would be easy to kill you and myself."

Anna turned round, her face blanched and eyes wide, the picture of terror.

"No, I sha'n't do it. You needn't be frightened, you poor little girl. You needn't fear anything from me. Only I wish . . ."

He stretched out his arms—but not toward her—and let them fall with a long sigh.

"I feel queer . . . dizzy . . . but there was something I wanted to say. It was . . . that I want you to be happy. You can be free, you know . . . if you should happen to love somebody, some time . . . it will be all right. Of course you can be free. Only tell me."

His voice was very gentle now. He went to Anna and took her hand, and she permitted it, dazed still, but not in fear of him.

"Will you kiss me for good-by? It is good-by this time . . . for months at least . . . unless you need me for anything. But I want you to feel that I am there to help you, if you need it. And if . . . anything goes wrong . . . you let me know. If anyone should hurt you . . . if it turned out you were wrong in trusting someone, and . . . you were ill-treated, I would find out about it too, and . . . I would . . . kill him."

"Oh," breathed Anna, shrinking from him, "you mustn't say such things or I shall certainly think you are insane."

"No, I'm not. I'm quite . . . myself. You

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don't understand, Anna . . . poor girl. It's all been a mistake . . . it's all my fault . . . I would have you, you remember? And you never have been really mine, never, never, not for an instant . . . and yet I can't seem to give you up. . . ."

He went and took up his coat, and put it on slowly.

"And yet it's come to that! For you care for someone else. Don't deny it, you do—or you will."

The blood flamed up into his face. He put his hand to his head, and then caught at the back of a chair to steady himself.

"That dizziness . . ." he muttered.

Anna ran to him and put her arm round his shoulders.

"Sit down and let me get you something," she begged. "A glass of water anyhow—I haven't any brandy or anything—do you feel ill?"

"No, no, I'm only tired . . . it's nothing . . ."

"But you're going to stay, aren't you, and have dinner? You could stay here to-night . . . you don't go till to-morrow, do you?"

Dan looked at her mistily, even in his suffering wondering at her.

"Yes, at ten to-night . . . I must go now."

She brought him a glass of water. He took that last service from her hand. Then they parted, without even the form of a caress for a sign of their broken bond.

XI.

ON the lawn at Fairmont a group of people were lounging away the after-luncheon hour of a golden day. The men were smoking and two of the women. In the quiet air the smoke dissolved slowly, its lingering spirals curiously in harmony with the spirit of the Indian Summer day. The air had a hint of wood smoke too, and through the tree-vistas could be seen the white wreaths floating over heaps of dead leaves. The lawns, cleared that morning, were already flecked again with these yellow and reddish leaves, falling constantly from the elms, oaks and maples of a century's growth. The bank was terraced, with steps and balustrades of white stone, down to the water's edge. Over the broad river hung a faint mist, which gave a wonderful distance where its banks converged, and blurred a little the opposite bank up which climbed oaks, elms and maples in a fading glow of autumn color.

The people were rather quiet, too, some because of a long luncheon, during which everybody had talked; some from the influence of the scene. George Vaughan was talking a little with Anna. Nicholas Purcell was being talked to by Mrs. Buccleugh. Margaret, with her cigarette, lay back in a low chair and idly interrupted from time to time Bella's monologue, or joined in the conversation of the other two, a very pretty girl with a short robust figure and a man with

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a dark, sensitive, worn face. It was a chance gathering—for though it was Anna's first visit at Fairmont, she had not yet achieved enough importance in Margaret Vaughan's eyes to have an occasion arranged for her.

Bella Buccleugh was smoking, too, but rapidly, and from the same necessity of nervous action that impelled her inconsequent chatter. Suddenly she rose, waving Nicholas imperiously back to his seat, and put her hand on Margaret's shoulder.

"Don't you want to come in and talk to me a little," she asked abruptly. "I must be going soon."

"Of course."

Margaret got up, with no apparent enthusiasm, however, and they walked away together, their long dresses sweeping over the fallen leaves with a pleasant sound. And Nicholas after a moment sat down by Anna. She turned a dreamy look on him.

"Isn't this like a picture?" she said. "It is just too beautiful to be real."

"It's a wonderful day," Nicholas assented.

"But it isn't the day! I think this place must be beautiful on any kind of day. It is heavenly! It must be easy to be happy here."

"Well, it is, generally," said George Vaughan placidly.

He looked happy, Anna thought—content as a perfectly conditioned animal. And his sort of indolence made Nicholas look like a tired man of affairs. Vaughan's face was sensuously sensitive, but it had the repose of satisfaction. It was so quiet that it seemed immobile. He had a remarkable beauty, a lithe, athletic body, thoroughly trained, and a head which

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people called Greek, but which was rather Italian—almost a Giorgione type—in its physical splendor.

Anna had got on with him wonderfully well. He liked people who were not pretentious in any way—easy, simple and good-humored people. Anna was simple enough, and she did not try at all to be impressive, he thought, and seemed to have no pretensions even on the score of her looks, as she might easily have had. And she was much more at ease with George Vaughan than she had ever been with any of these people—even Nicholas. She had a delightful feeling, with him, not only that being clever didn't matter, but that nothing mattered except what you actually were. It didn't matter how you said things or what you said, particularly. The main thing was to have something agreeable to do or to look at, and to enjoy it. The process of translating his impressions into accurate speech did not appeal to Vaughan as a thing necessary to be gone through, and he did not expect it of anyone else. His impressions were perfectly definite, but his speech was apt to be nebulous, when an idea was demanded of him.

Nicholas was apt to demand an idea, very apt to confuse a person not accustomed to speak or think accurately. Anna felt this as he joined in their talk. For the first time she felt that he was really active, even restless. For the first time she felt that she would rather not talk about what he seemed interested in—her impressions of the scene—that she would prefer to sit quiet and simply feel it all, with Vaughan. But she liked immensely to have Nicholas there beside her. And her eyes met his with a look that said as much—with the look of intimacy not to

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be mistaken in kind though it may be in degree. George Vaughan's contemplative eyes caught that look and it deceived him into thinking that Margaret very likely was right, and that Nick was making love to this handsome grass-widow.

Meantime Margaret and Mrs. Buccleugh had disappeared through a French window opening on the lawn. They were in the library. Bella had thrown herself on a lounge and looked up with a reckless air.

"I suppose you've guessed," she said.

"I don't know—but I thought from the way you talked at lunch about going on the stage——"

"Yes, it's all over. This last thing was final. It is no use trying any longer, and I suppose I might have seen it long ago, if I hadn't been bound not to."

"Oh, Bella, I *am* so sorry." Margaret sat down beside her with a sigh of distress. "I've been hoping that it would come out all right."

"But it won't! And I can't bear it any longer. I— well, I determined not to let myself weaken this time and—I've applied for the divorce."

"Oh, Bella, this is perfectly wretched! I can't do anything, of course. It seems idiotic to ask you if you're absolutely sure."

"Sure? Why, Madge——"

"I mean sure of yourself—of what you're doing."

"Oh, I don't know how I can be any surer. I know I can't stand this life any longer. I simply must get away from it all—and try—to live somehow or other. I think I could manage to live away from him, but I can't stand it to live *with* him any longer."

"And yet you'll be unhappy if you do it."

"Oh—unhappy—but I sha'n't be humiliated every

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moment in my own eyes—as I am now. That's the worst of it—I feel like a fool and worse. And yet I can't help doing what I do. I can't help spying on him, and reading his letters on the sly. I open them over steam and then seal them up again, so that he doesn't know——. Yes, I do. When I see a letter that looks suspicious I'm *driven* to open it, I'm *forced* to do it. Oh, who would ever have thought that I should be a sneak! You know how I like to have things open and above-board. Sometimes I think I shouldn't mind what he did, if only he would tell me the truth about it. And yet I know it's just the truth that I can't bear. And so—— what's the use? We might as well give it up. For he can't change any more than I can. He can't help his nature and I can't help being a jealous idiot. If only I didn't care so much for him—if I could amuse myself as he does. But I've tried and I can't. And he doesn't care for me, Madge. Oh, no—not really. No, he doesn't. He likes me well enough as a good fellow, if I could just be that. But he has no feeling—no tenderness. I bore him. If he only cared for me I would forgive him anything. But as it is—you see—we are better apart.”

Bella was crying, catching her breath in little sobs, between her low staccato sentences. With a despairing gesture she abandoned herself to her tears for some moments. Her eyes were already red and swollen and her fair skin blotchy. She pushed her hair back from her forehead and at once she looked old and plain. But indifferently she faced the light, gazing blankly at the floor, her mouth and throat trembling.

“So I shall go up in the country for a while and he

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will stay in town. He won't go away now you know, because *she* is there. And do you know, Madge, I think he will marry her afterward, if he can. Yes, he hinted as much. But very likely she won't; because you know he will be poor. He won't keep a cent of the money that I made over to him when we were married. So there it is. Very likely she will jilt him after all. Did I tell you I saw her the other night? Somebody pointed her out to me in a box at the theatre. She looks as cold and calculating as a cat. Black hair and eyes—a Spanish sort of type—very stunning."

"And what will you do, Bella?"

"Oh, I shall just get the divorce here. Of course he won't contest it. And then, as I said, I shall go on the stage."

"Seriously? I thought you'd given that up."

"Only when it seemed possible that we might patch things up. It's the only interest I have now. And you know I have the ability. I don't doubt I can really make a success if I work hard as I mean to. I shall study this winter, and in the spring, after the divorce, you know, I don't doubt I can get some engagement for next fall. And I'll come here for Christmas just the same and we'll do your plays—only of course Bob won't come. It will be kept quiet, you know—it won't come into court before spring, my lawyer tells me."

"Oh, Bella," Margaret sighed again. She looked sympathetic and at the same time irritated. "How wretched it all is!"

"Yes, it is. And I suppose it's rather stupid of me to talk to you about it——"

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Margaret colored at the blunt allusion to her own experience, and looked more irritated and less sympathetic.

"I don't know why you shouldn't talk to me about it . . . I'm glad you'll come for Christmas." She moved to a chair not quite so near Bella. "I shouldn't know what to do without you. I've decided to have the stage put in the billiard-room—I had a man down the other day and he said that could be done very well. They're going to begin work next week. . . . There's Millicent and her most devoted. She's going to sing, I suppose."

The pretty girl with her squire passed the library windows and went into the next room. After some idling with the piano-keys she began Schubert's "Auf dem Wasser zu Singen." Her voice was pure and light, with a soft caressing quality.

"Do you know, I think that is serious," said Margaret. "At least with him."

"Oh, do you? . . . And how about the other . . . Nick's affair?"

"Oh, as serious as usual."

"He likes stupid women, doesn't he? All men do."

"Does she bore you? I don't find her exciting myself. By the way, though, I believe she's thinking of acting, too—or light opera or something. Nick got her a teacher, and he says she has a big florid sort of voice. And with her looks, of course, she can easily get into something. Has he been asking you about managers and so on?"

"Yes, he has."

"Well, it was for her. He got out of me everything I ever knew on the subject, too."

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Bella sighed and got up restlessly.

"Let's go somewhere else. I don't feel like listening to Millicent's piping. Or you go back to them and I'll come in a few minutes. I'll run up and bathe my eyes, I am always so hideous when I cry. So Bob tells me. What time are they all going back?"

"I suppose the four-thirty."

"Well, I'll go with them. I'd like to talk with Nick. He's such a dear, isn't he? . . . And George too. You're happy, aren't you, Madge?"

"Yes, I am happy——. If—if I can only keep so," Margaret said softly, looking out at the group on the lawn. "But we haven't money enough really. I wish I could make some. Perhaps my Wyoming man will make some for me. If only I had the courage to plunge on something. That's the only way to get anything in this world."

"I suppose it is. I'd plunge fast enough if I could see anything I wanted. . . . Perhaps I shall get over this after a while. Do you think so? For if I'm going on caring for him just the same I may as well go out and jump in the river. I shouldn't mind a bit plunging on that!"

"Poor Bella—— are you as desperate as all that? And I thought it was all smoothed over! Up at Lenox he seemed so sweet and nice and talked about you so affectionately——"

"Oh, affectionately—yes, as if I were his maiden aunt. Well, he can't help it any more than I can. I only say that it's infernal luck for two people like us ever to be attracted to each other. There are plenty of women who could get along with Bob perfectly. Just give him a free rein and he's sweet as

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the day is long. If I only had the same temperament. . . . The times when he's liked me best have been when I was trying to be in love with somebody else. If I could succeed I've no doubt he'd really be fond of me. But I'm such a sentimental idiot, I can't."

Bella showed a disposition to linger and begin again, but Margaret moved decisively toward the window.

"Come out as soon as you can," she said.

"Well, it's nearly four o'clock—we'll have to start down soon, I suppose."

And she trailed dejectedly out into the hall and upstairs. Margaret went back to the people on the lawn, conscious that she had not been very consoling. It seemed really absurd to her that anyone should have hysterics or heroics over Bobby Buccleugh; and she deeply disliked to have Bella seem to claim any community of experience with her.

Indeed there was none, except that they both loved, and really cared for nothing else. But love of Bobby Buccleugh had no excuse for being a grand passion—couldn't be, in fact—whereas love of George Vaughan couldn't well be anything else. That was in her mind as she went toward him.

The three were watching her, too, as she approached tall and graceful in her rippling white dress, and none of them would have denied that she looked the ideal chatelaine. She was at her best in her home.

The setting of the whole place was immensely becoming to her—the broad green reaches and noble trees, the stately, quiet house, the unmarred beauty all about, the air of ease, peace and order throughout her domain.

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It was this aspect of it all that most deeply impressed Anna. To just this sort of thing she was peculiarly susceptible. Her ambition had been to possess, to be, something like this herself, even though her dreams had never reached anything so beautiful as this reality. In the country of her birth, all was new, bare, crude, the growth of scarcely one generation. Trees, grass and buildings were created for the needs of the time; and all seemed temporary and hardly rooted in the soil. A century had completely changed the face of that country. Between the mountains and the sea only a few mouldering cloisters showed where time had passed, and there age was not impressive; it was too much out of the picture. But here, in this softer, greener, more finished land, each year gave an added value in beauty, not adding something new, but deepening the charm of what was permanent. Permanence and stability had a poetic attraction for Anna's clinging and conservative mind. She would certainly have been no more adventurous than a limpet, if she had had a suitable rock to cling to. To be the careful administratrix of Fairmont would have been career enough for her.

Nicholas was rather surprised and puzzled by her evident feeling; her pleasure and the wistfulness of her face were more marked than he had ever seen in her before. She seemed unable or unwilling to find words for her emotion; and there were long silences during which she sat looking away through the dreaming sunlight and shadow of the park, or out across the river or up at the gray stone façade of the house, and the two men watched her. When Millicent began to sing, the light, quick, passionate melody of the

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water-song, softened by distance, seemed to come floating up from the river itself, in magical snatches borne by breeze and tide.

She sang well. They all listened—Margaret too, who came out in the middle of it—till the last beautiful phrase ended. Then at her suggestion they walked down to an angle of the terrace from which the sweep of the river could best be seen. One of the gardeners, a Japanese, who was at work near there, stood up and bowed nearly to the ground as they passed, and the master and mistress nodded to him. Anna was still in her dream. The three people with her did not disturb it; they belonged in it, with their grace and sweetness of manner, for Margaret was sweet to her, too. And before it all ended there was one more picture to take away with her. On the way back to the house Nicholas turned aside, having, he announced, caught a glimpse through the trees of his nephew; and the rest followed him. The baby was asleep in his carriage under a fluffy white parasol; beside him was his nurse, a woman with a refined and intelligent face. The child was about a year old, strong and handsome, with an unusual amount of curly fair hair, and golden lashes showing against the sweet flush in his cheeks. Of the four people standing about the carriage three wore the same expression—the same solicitude and half humorous tenderness—as they contemplated the heir of Fairmont. Anna noted that look, and Margaret's glance at her husband; and then she felt the presence of happiness—if that is not too calm a word—at least of a poignant joy in life. It was a keen, a lasting impression that she carried away.

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They walked down the hill to the station, Mrs. Buccleugh, Purcell and Anna, and after them Millicent and her painter, who had been resurrected at the last moment from the music-room. Once in the train, which was full, Millicent and the painter disappeared into one of the forward cars. There was but one vacant seat left and Anna found herself put into that with Bella Buccleugh, while Purcell stood in the aisle talking to them for a few moments, and then took part of a seat at the other end of the car. Neither of the two women particularly wanted that half-hour's tête-à-tête. Either would vastly have preferred one with Purcell. But Anna had a question or two to ask of Bella Buccleugh which she could not so readily have asked of him.

"Tell me, has Mrs. Vaughan ever been on the stage?" she inquired as soon as Nicholas had left them.

"Oh, no—she studied for it once, though, before she was divorced, you know. Why?"

"I thought from the way she talked at luncheon that she had acted."

"Oh, the school where she studied gives public matinées, don't you know? She appeared at some of those. I believe she thought of going in seriously for the profession at one time, but it didn't come to that. She fell in love with George Vaughan instead."

"But . . . divorced? How do you mean? I didn't know she had been married before."

"Didn't you? How funny! It's rather a romance."

Bella talked in a quick monotone, hard to follow in the noise of the train. She had a brown veil droop-

ing over her hat-brim which partly hid her face from Anna. But the nervous movements of her hands, the twitching of her mouth, and her indifference to what she was saying, could not be hidden. Anna wondered what was the matter with her. At luncheon she had been especially lively and gay.

"Why is it a romance?"

"Oh, it's the kind of thing you're always reading about, a life and death affair, don't you know? She was unhappy with her first husband, but he wouldn't give her any legal ground for divorce, because he was in politics and didn't want the talk. Finally she left him and was about to go on the stage when she met George Vaughan. They fell in love instantly and then of course Margaret was simply wild for her divorce. She went to Dakota and got it and then she married George."

"Oh," murmured Anna, quite shocked.

"Oh, yes, it's no secret. And you can't blame her, when you see how they care for one another. They're absolutely devoted. And that's the only thing that counts anyway, don't you think so?"

"I don't know."

"Well, it is for them. They live up in the country all the time, don't see many people, and they both are happy. They have a pretty place, haven't they?"

"Yes, beautiful."

"It's been in George's family for nearly a century. But he never had money enough to live there. It was always let, till he married Margaret. Even now they have barely enough. But of course Margaret will have plenty, some day. She and Nicholas will be rather rich. Nicholas is a dear, isn't he?"

"I suppose he is."

"Won't you even admit that," Bella sighed. "How stuffy the car is! Shall we open a window?"

"If you like."

The track ran for some distance close to the river. And Anna, looking out on it, travelled back in her thoughts to Fairmont, past which this blue water flowed on its way to the sea. Fairmont was even more interesting to her now, in the light of Bella's gossip. She was so absorbed in her thoughts that she fairly forgot, for some moments, her companion. And Bella, looking at her in despair, sank back in her corner of the seat. Rather than be silent she had snatched at the first subject offered, and would have chattered all the way to town, given any encouragement. But she was not capable just now of much mental exertion. Presently, however, she began again and talked about the theatre, and Anna lent a half attentive ear. At another time she would have listened eagerly, but now a sudden new light on her own situation blinded her to anything else.

Both were glad enough when the journey ended. Anna had expected that Purcell would go back with her to the boarding-house for a little while before dinner, and he had intended to go. But as they were getting out of the train, Bella made a sudden whispered appeal to him.

"Do come and talk to me for half an hour! I'm so miserable, I can't bear to be alone."

Moved by her look, more than by her words, he consented; unable indeed to resist any appeal to his charity. Anna was disappointed. But as he put her into a station-cab he said:

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"I'm sorry. It's a bore, but I can't help it. Are you going to be at home this evening?"

"Oh, of course. I'm always there."

"I mean, may I come?"

"Oh, yes."

XII.

IT was the first time he had come in the evening, though Anna saw him at least every other day. She had not yet got rid of her fear of the opinions of other people. The doubt as to Miss Thaw's opinion of her, as to the opinion of the maid who so often announced Purcell, frequently made her uncomfortable. But she did not yield anything to this doubt. She cared now so much more for Purcell than for anything else in her life that she was slowly gaining a certain independence of mind. She was capable now of ignoring anything that might interfere with their relations, and of deliberately putting him before all else.

But the feeling that Miss Thaw was probably criticising her and very likely gossiping about her to Flora O'Beirne, made her stiff and unresponsive to the maiden lady's social advances. Miss Thaw, having honestly tried to be friendly with her, finally gave up the effort, and reported to Flora her repulse. And Flora cooled still more toward her protégée. In fact they seldom saw one another now.

Anna was practically solitary except for Nicholas. Mrs. Vaughan had called on her twice, but they had not got very far toward intimacy. Anna, handicapped by the consciousness of her material surroundings, and her anomalous position, was unable to meet her visitor frankly. She was melancholy, ill at ease, and showed it. And she made no effort to interest

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Mrs. Vaughan. From a feeling that she could not meet more fortunate people on even terms she was despairingly willing to cut herself off from them altogether. And this unhappiness affected even her relation with Nicholas. She did not feel sure in any way of him.

Cramped thus on the social side, she had thrown herself with all the more energy into her work. Herr Pannier required her to unlearn all that she thought she knew about singing, and to begin at the alphabet of his method. She worked faithfully, but so far had not earned a word of praise from the gloomy little man. She liked him, however, though she felt rather hopeless of attaining the delicate precision, the thorough workmanship that he required. In manner and appearance he was a typical drill-master—a small man, neat and blond, with a pointed beard and blue eyes, severe, rigid, and melancholy. He bound her down to the harshest aspect of work; and promised her some years of it before she would be fit for any professional appearance.

But Anna was coming to dwell more and more on another prospect—the possibility of using all her present capital of knowledge, youth, and beauty in an immediate stage career. She knew that she could sing better and that she was handsomer than most of the stars of light music and burlesque whom she had taken pains to see. She thought she could easily learn to act as well as they did. And whatever the deprivations of that life, at least it would have some satisfactions. If it be true that nothing saddens a woman so much as the suppression of her vanity, Anna had her reasons for being sad. She almost never

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now felt any satisfaction in herself, and so she was almost always constrained and depressed. Even with Nicholas she could rarely expand in that way. His attention to her was flattery in a sense, but she could not take it as her right. She could not but feel grateful for it, and tremble lest she should lose it. It meant to her so much more than it did to him—or so she thought. For she had nothing but him, while he had—all that world of his of which she knew nothing. Because of his experience, so much beyond her gauge, because of the multifarious claims on him, part of which she knew about and part guessed, he seemed above any need of her. And yet—he did not come entirely out of kindness to her—she was sure of that.

The kindness, though, was there, and she appealed more strongly to him because she was unhappy and alone, and still more because he obviously mattered to her. Nicholas had the instinct of solvency highly developed; it was necessary to him to satisfy any reasonable claim upon him, even when a good deal of boredom to himself was involved. But there was no boredom in the time he gave to Anna. He was strongly attracted to her. And Anna instinctively and without thought presented her most attractive aspect to him. Just as she was prettier for him than for anyone else, as his coming brought light and color to her face, so her whole nature softened and glowed for him. It was not only that she ardently desired to please him, but that he pleased her so completely. She accepted him without question or criticism, with a keen interest and satisfaction in everything he said or did, that was the most artless flattery. Even the

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least vain of men basks in the atmosphere approbative. Purcell had had a good deal of it, but not much with so naïve a quality as Anna gave him. And besides the June sunshine of a pretty woman's admiration there was, too, just a tang of electricity in the air, a hint of something brewing beyond the horizon. They were very friendly and—a little more.

When Nicholas came in, soon after dinner, he relaxed into his favorite chair with an air of being at home, and a smile that confessed past weariness and present pleasure.

"That was a good deal of a bore," he said. "Even more than I expected."

His disposition to be practically kind, in fact, did not involve any altruistic or amiable pose. He was, Anna had found, extremely frank as to the faults of his friends, and if they tired or irritated him he was apt to say as much, both to the offender and to any other person in his confidence.

"I'm sorry. What was the matter with her? She acted so queerly on the train."

"Oh, hysterics. Her nerves run away with her. And then she is pretty unhappy just now."

"Is she? What about? I thought she was a particularly gay person."

"Well—this is a secret just now, though it won't be long—she's getting a divorce, though she's fond of her husband. He's treated her rather badly."

"That nice, jolly-looking man? I saw him once—the first time I saw you. And I thought you were all so gay and happy, and I envied you so! And now—well, some of you *are* happy, to be sure. Your sister is, isn't she? And no wonder. She has every-

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thing to make her so. I think she is the luckiest woman I've ever known."

"Did you fall in love with George too?" Nicholas asked, with his lazy smile.

"Oh, yes, and the place and everything. It was so beautiful! I never saw anything like it before."

Anna sat quite near Purcell, leaning forward, her elbows on her knees and her palms supporting her round chin; looking now at him and now out the open window. The tiny garden was flooded with hazy moonlight, the warm night was as magical as the day had been, and only the faintest breeze swayed the white curtains inward. The unshaded gas-light shone directly down on Anna's young face, her flushed cheeks, large innocent eyes, and golden hair. She was still under the spell of the day's pleasure, and the attraction which drew her to Nicholas was somehow strengthened by it.

"That seems to me an ideal life," she said suddenly. "By the side of it I hate what I am trying to do. That kind of thing is what I should like, but I can never have it."

"Never? Why not?"

"Because——" She paused for a moment. She had never spoken to Purcell about Dan except in the most impersonal and non-committal way, but one of the ideas she had lately imbibed was that freedom of speech about one's own affairs was not only permissible but proper. It was in line with all the freedom of these people's lives, and she was coming to accept their point of view. And yet she was still unable to break through her reserve.

Nicholas, looking at her, waited.

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"Oh, because I can never settle down, really," Anna went on hurriedly. "My husband's business will always take all his time and strength. And he will always want to be in the West—and everything is so different there—so new and unfinished. And I've been thinking, you know, about going on the stage. But I hate the idea of it!"

Tears filled her eyes, and all the unhappiness of her general situation emphasized her dislike of this particular phase.

"Why do you hate it?" he asked quietly.

"Oh, because—I'm not fit for that sort of a life. I can never be a first-class artist, I know that well enough. I could never sing in grand opera, or anything like that. And I could never act well. I could sing comic opera, or in musical shows, but it all seems—horrid to me, really. Sometimes I think I'll do it, but I don't really want to a bit. I should be all alone, and everyone says disagreeable things happen—and then——"

"Yes, and then?"

"I should lose what I really want."

"And what do you really want?"

"I want to be at home, somewhere. And to have some social life, and some nice place that I can manage myself and feel that I'm really doing something with. I don't want to be a public character."

And she smiled ruefully through her tears.

"No, I don't think you were cut out for one, myself," said Purcell. "But how about your original idea—or is a concert singer a public character too, in your sense?"

"Well, not as much of course. But," she sighed,

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"it would take years of training before I could do anything. Before I could sing as well as Miss Farrell does, for instance. She has studied abroad, of course?"

"Oh, yes, with Marchesi, I believe, for several years."

"There, you see. And then I don't know even that I can go on here as I'm doing now. I'm not certain of a thing!"

Nicholas waited, but again the impulse failed to carry her into complete confession.

"Tell me, what did your sister think about the stage? Did she feel that way about it? Mrs. Buclough said she intended to act at one time."

"No, I don't think she felt the drawbacks as strongly as you do. But then, she's adventurous rather—she likes experience for its own sake, and you don't, do you?"

"No, only when it's pleasant!"

"And then she simply had to do something. She's a very restless person, or she used to be, and she wasn't happy, and that seemed to be the only thing she wanted to do."

"Do all women think about the stage when they're unhappy?"

"Oh, no, some go in for charity, I believe, and some for society. Some go to the church and some to the devil."

"I don't see that any of those would do for me," said Anna. "I can't go in for society and I'm not religious or charitable. And the devil doesn't attract me much either."

"You mean that you're unhappy?"

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"Oh, yes. You knew that, didn't you? But I'm not going to talk to you about it."

She sprang up from her chair and went to the piano. Nicholas followed.

"Why not?" he demanded.

"Because you've been bored enough to-day! You've heard Mrs. Buccleugh's troubles and that's enough for one day. And I don't want you to go away and tell somebody else how I've bored you!"

"That wasn't a very pleasant thing to say," said Nicholas coldly. He moved away from her and took up his hat; then came back, putting out his hand. "Perhaps I'd better go," he said in the same tone, with the same look, hurt and resentful.

"Good-night," faltered Anna. She let him get to the door, then her pride went down with a rush. Never had she seen him look that way, offended with her; and terror lest there should be a real break between them overmastered her.

"Why are you angry? I didn't mean to say anything to hurt you," she protested.

"Do you mean that you were perpetrating a joke?" inquired Nicholas ironically. He paused with his hand on the door, quite conscious that he was bullying her.

"Well, not entirely. I thought it might bore you."

"No, I don't believe you did. But you thought I might tell somebody else that it did. Or do you mean that was the joke?"

"I don't know," murmured Anna.

"You did really think so, then? Don't you know that if you stood on the same plane with Mrs. Buccleugh, I wouldn't have spoken to you as I did about

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her? I spoke to you as I might to—well, to my sister, for instance. It wouldn't occur to her that it wasn't safe to say whatever she chose to me."

"It wouldn't to me either. It wasn't that!"

"You began to say something, and then suddenly stopped as though you were afraid. And then you said—what you did about Mrs. Buccleugh. I don't know what else that means."

"I only meant that I thought you would be bored."

"Well, that doesn't show any large amount of perspicience—or confidence—on your part. But I dare say I've deserved this in some way."

Anna looked miserable and sullen.

"I'm sorry I said anything at all," she said stiffly.

"Of course I don't want you to tell me anything you don't want to say," added Nicholas relentlessly.

"But neither do I want you to say that kind of thing again. Good-by, Anna."

"Good-by," she murmured inaudibly.

This time she did not call him back, but stood rigid, leaning against the piano, her hands behind her, palms down on the keys, until she heard the house-door close after him. Then she sank down on the piano-stool in a revery. Her face changed quickly. Her lips curved, her heavy eyelids drooped, she smiled. Purcell's last speech had meant anything but that he was not coming back. For the first time he had called her by her name—though for some time past they had dropped the formality of surnames, and addressed one another without any at all. This quarrel, since it was not to end their intimacy, would certainly advance it. Nicholas, for

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that reason, had not been at all sorry to quarrel. And Anna was not sorry either, for now that she thought it over, the cause of it was flattering to her. He had been hurt because she had not been willing to admit that they were as much to one another as they really were. She knew well enough that she stood on a different plane from Bella Buccleugh, and that in some way he cared about her, and would be interested in whatever concerned her.

Why was it, then, that she had been unable to talk to him about her troubles, as plenty of other women did, whom he cared nothing about? She did not now believe—as she would have done earlier—that Nicholas would think the less of her because she had disagreed with her husband. That, it seemed, was an ordinary thing to do. The two women whom she had seen to-day had done it, and they had not let the mistake spoil their lives. Margaret Vaughan had freed herself from an unhappy marriage and she was now happy. Bella Buccleugh had decided that she would be less unhappy without her husband than with him, and she was going to free herself. It was possible, then, in a way for even a woman to begin over again; and from the new point of view, it was a courageous and right thing to do. This point of view appealed to Anna, since it seemed to open a possible prospect to her desire for happiness. And yet she was shaken by the sweeping away of all her old traditions which it involved. To live for one's emotions, as these people apparently did, was certainly freedom, but in a way it was terribly unsettling. In a way it offset the material solidity of their fortunes. Still in the end it was the determination to be happy,

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at whatever cost of initiative energy, that seemed to her the most wonderful thing about them.

Anna envied them this power of striking out strongly for themselves; she felt that she lacked it. Though she began to feel that it was a good thing to be bold, she was prevented even from acknowledging to herself what it was that she wanted, much more from seeking it actively. Much as she was interested in Nicholas Purcell, her pride and timidity forbade her to make any frank claim on him, or even to recognize the extent of her interest.

She was afraid to follow out the ideas suggested by the day's events to their conclusion; afraid of the possible action suggested thereby to herself. She abandoned herself instead to a vague delicious dream, in which she and Nicholas were together, without any harsh reference to the actual facts of life.

She sat still on the piano-stool, for some time, dreaming, and unconsciously waiting for Nicholas to come back. She did not really think that he would come, and yet she stayed up till half-past ten, trying to read a little in Maeterlinck's "Treasure of the Humble," a book he had brought her, but finding her own meditations more enthralling than Maeterlinck's. Then she went slowly about her preparations for bed, letting down the false book-case and removing the screens that concealed her toilet arrangements. The last thing in her mind at night and the first in the morning was the question, When would Nicholas come again and how would they meet?

She woke to a vague feeling of happiness, a secret excitement that made the whole day bright to her. She thought that perhaps he would come to take her

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out to dinner, as several times he had done. Having bungled her practice in the morning she went to her lesson unable to keep her mind on it. In consequence Herr Pannier made her a scene. He began to pace the room while she was going through her exercises—a sure sign of disturbance—and finally seized his brow in his hands and stopped her in the middle of a scale. The body of his remarks being in German, Anna happily understood little, except that she had produced her tones in the old-time manner, the atrocity of which Herr Pannier had endeavored to beat into her head. She began again, several times, but with no better success.

“Dumm, dumm,” he groaned. “How long haf you vorked to-day, hein?”

“An hour,” she said meekly.

“Und yesterday?”

“Two—no, I didn’t practise at all. I was out in the country.”

“Just so. You can go home now. We can do noddings to-day. You are vorse to-day als ever. You t’ink you better try to go on vith me?”

“Why—— yes, I think so. Why not?”

“Oh, it is maybe losing your time—und mine. I cannot make you sing. Dese American voices! Und efery one at once wanting in public to appear! Ach, Himmel!”

And he began to cry, from simple nervous irritation. Anna, aghast, put up her music and left hurriedly. Her last sight of Herr Pannier showed him bent over the centre-table, his face buried on a pile of papers and one hand clutching the chenille cover frenziedly. She laughed as she went down the dingy

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stairs, but resolved to work hard—to-morrow. She knew that she could do nothing that day.

The Indian summer was over. The day had dawned cold and cloudy, and in the middle of the afternoon it began to rain heavily. Anna, dressed for Purcell, was contemplating her open fire, when with a knock at the door Flora O'Beirne appeared. Anna had not seen her for a fortnight.

"How cosy you look! No, thanks, I won't take off my coat, for I've only a few moments. I've come to say good-by—we're off to-morrow," announced Flora.

"Really? That means you've done what you wanted to do here, I suppose."

"Well, partly. But we have to go back now, anyway. Michael's affairs simply make it necessary that he should be in Sonora for the next two months. Then we may have another siege of it here. But again I may not see you for years—or it may be forever, as the song says."

"I'm sorry—— I shall feel quite deserted," said Anna mendaciously. "But if you do come back, you'll probably find me here. It's really very nice indeed, and I'm ever so much obliged to you."

"Oh, not a bit of it. And how is Daniel? Does he find time to write much?"

"Oh, quite often."

"And he is busy with that road, I suppose?"

"Yes, very busy."

"Well, tell him I expect him to give me a pass on it when it's done, and maybe Michael can reciprocate some day. Is he well?"

"Oh, yes, I think so, quite well."

"I thought he was looking badly when he left. He

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don't get much comfort out there, I suppose, poor fellow."

Anna colored faintly. "He writes that he's very comfortable," she said coldly.

"Oh, yes, he'd make the best of it, of course. That's like him—he isn't one to complain. He's just the sort that needs looking after. But perhaps there's some woman out there that does look after him a bit, do you think so? He's the kind that women like to fuss over, too."

"I don't know, I'm sure. He used to write about a Mrs. Manlove, but she's up at Mallory."

"Well, I hope there's someone. It did seem to me he was a man to have a woman about him. How d'ye get on with the singing?"

With two or three perfunctory remarks, Flora brought her visit to a close. She left Anna indignant, but not with the "bee in her bonnet" that she had meant to put there. Anna had not been roused to jealousy of Dan—it needed for that some tangible fact—but only to a deeper dislike of meddling Mrs. O'Beirne.

It was after four now, and she sat watching the fire, half-hypnotized by its glow—waiting, waiting. As the time crept past five she became restless; got up and watched the rain pouring down into the yards of the old houses, washing the last leaves from tree and vines. Then she rearranged the few books on her table and rang to have the fire made up. When the hands of her watch showed nearly six she sat tense with expectation in her chair. Twice the door-bell rang and she waited with fast-beating heart for the knock at her door. But none came. She went down

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late to dinner; could not eat, and was back in her room at half-past seven. An hour later she was on the verge of tears.

All the warm sweetness of her dream was gone now, as completely as the dream of summer had vanished under the pelting rain. All her prospect was gray and dismal.

The old feeling that her hold on Purcell was only tentative came back with crushing force. Her jealousy of the unknown in his life, sometimes dormant, but always there, awoke in full strength. Perhaps he was tired of her, and would take this excuse to forsake her! But no, that could not be. His anger showed that he cared something. But perhaps he would cherish that anger—pride might prevent him from coming back, at least for some time. Perhaps he was waiting for some word from her.

And she sat down to write to him, with only the vaguest idea of what she meant to say, but under the imperious necessity of calling him back. She wrote "Dear Mr. Purcell," and halted—for after the formality of that disused address how was she to write to him as she felt and as she wished to write? She took another sheet of paper and wrote tremulously, "Dear Nicholas." And the sight of the words sent the color flaming to her cheeks, intoxicated her. She bent down and kissed the paper, then started up. The bell had rung again. She caught up the two sheets of paper, tore them in half, and, as the knock sounded at her door, dropped them into the fire. It was a moment before she could command her voice to say "Come in." The waitress opened the door and announced "Mr. Purcell."

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Anna smiled at him as he entered, with joy, the keenest she had ever been conscious of, shining in her face. And there was confession, too, in Nicholas's look. He had meant not to come that night, but a sudden impulse had swept away his reasons.

XIII.

AND yet, though a certain surrender was involved in this, Nicholas had by no means abdicated. Unmistakably he kept the advantage which, as between Anna and himself, he would always keep. The great concession she might be able to get from him—he might need her, want her near him. But she would have to be satisfied with that. She needed him more than he needed her. And the general business of concession would be hers.

She did not dare, now, to take his return as a triumph. She pushed a chair up to the fire for him—though it had hitherto been a point of pride with her to be waited on by the admiring male—and said timidly,

“It’s a very bad night, isn’t it?”

“Oh, it’s raining rather.”

And Nicholas wheeled up another plush chair for her. He had left his wet rain-coat, hat and overshoes in the hall, but it was evident that he had walked, and as usual had not bothered himself with an umbrella. The freshness and chill of the rain hung about him. His hair looked damp, and the long straight lock clung dankly to his forehead, till he brushed it back with his handkerchief. He was in evening dress, and Anna noticed that he had fastened his tie down with a pin, which showed plainly.

“Is it too hot in here for you? Perhaps it seems

so, coming in from outside?" Anna asked anxiously as he did not sit down.

"Oh, no, it's very comfortable. Have you been reading this?" He picked up the volume of Maeterlinck from the table and flicked the leaves over absently.

"Yes, a little—only a few pages."

"You weren't interested then?"

"Oh, yes, but it is hard to read—especially when one is busy. It's hard to keep your mind fixed on that sort of thing. It's so vague."

"Tell me what you've been busy about, then." And he consented to sit down near her, still with a slight aloofness of manner, which Anna felt keenly. But she noticed also that he somehow looked younger, more alive, even a little excited. There was a suggestion of storm and stress about him.

"Oh, nothing much—thinking mostly," she said quickly. "I had a quarrel with Herr Pannier because I couldn't attend to my lesson. I couldn't think of anything to-day but—— what happened last night. I thought perhaps I shouldn't see you again." And she smiled tremulously.

"Why did you think that?"

"Oh, because—you went away angry. And you have so many interests—you know so many more interesting people than I am——. Why should you bother to come?"

"You're much mistaken. I haven't many real interests—I don't know anybody who interests me more than you do."

"Oh, you don't mean that." She blushed and looked startled.

"Certainly I mean it. You interest me—enormously. And for that reason I wish we could be frank—that you could be. If we are to see much of one another you must be. How can there be any friendship or intimacy without that?"

"But—do you mean I'm to tell you everything? But how can I?"

"Why not? I want to know all about you. You know all about me—all the essentials."

"Oh, no, I don't! And besides it's different. You can tell all your own affairs, if you like—there's nothing to prevent. But you can't always tell—somebody else's affairs. I've never told anybody. I don't think I ought to. Can't we be friends without that?" she pleaded. "I don't really know much about you, either."

"But I'll tell you anything you want to know, that's the difference. I have no secrets. How queer you are, Anna! I don't think I ever knew a woman before who minded talking about her husband—for I suppose that's what you mean. It's your Western bringing up, I daresay—it isn't considered proper out there?"

"No, it isn't—and I don't think it is proper," and Anna lifted her chin, decidedly piqued.

"It isn't proper to talk about your individual experiences, simply because another person is mixed up in them to whom you happen to be married!" Nicholas laughed and got up to walk about the room restlessly. "You are a perfect little bourgeoisie, with your worry about propriety. No one will know it anyhow except us two—so if it is public opinion you fear——"

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"It isn't public opinion."

"Do you think it really wrong, then, irrespective of who knows about it, to talk to me about your life, your real feelings, your—husband, not to take that august name in vain?"

Anna was silent, staring miserably at the fire. Nicholas's roughness hurt her deeply, and she felt they were about to quarrel again and that she could not help it.

"In other words, you're not an individual at all, but a Married Woman." His tone was biting—he hurled this epithet at her contemptuously. "A personality *manqué*."

"I don't know what you mean, but very likely I am," said Anna finally. "At least I think it would be wrong. Because, if you must know it, we have—we don't agree very well. We have quarrelled. And it wouldn't be fair in me to complain of him or—to talk about him. It would be mean, and you know it. I can't help it if all the other women you know do it. And if we really can't be friends without that—why then——" But she couldn't say it; her voice died away.

"Confess you've been reading the essay on Silence," Nicholas said laughing, and he came back and sat down by her, with the book in his hand. He turned over the pages and here and there read aloud a paragraph, looking very much at ease. Anna watched him, bewildered by this sudden clearing of the air; not listening to the philosopher's cool and lulling sentences, but only to the lazy voice of Nicholas, which was like a half-satirical, if friendly comment on what he read. She had come now to think him handsome.

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His face, not distinguished otherwise than by intelligence and character, seemed to her not only fascinating, but good and sure, and so altogether adorable. Yet she did not feel that she understood him.

Presently he dropped the book and again took up the subject of their talk.

"I liked your husband," he said coolly. "Especially the last time I saw him here. I should like to see more of him. I don't know or care anything about business, and what I saw of him in his business aspect didn't particularly interest me. But outside that I should think he must be a very good fellow, with a decided temperament. Isn't it so?"

"Very likely," said Anna stiffly. "Only it would be hard to see him outside of business. That's all he does."

"Wonderful! Rather terrible, too. I can't imagine putting one's temperament into business. That's not what it's meant for, I'm sure. And yet I suppose that's what men do who make the big fortunes. Devin means to make a fortune, doesn't he?"

"Yes, he expects to," Anna said, looking very sulky, downcast and handsome. It angered her to hear Nicholas talk impersonally about something so personal to her, if not to them both.

"And do you think he will?"

"I? I don't know anything about business, either. But if he doesn't his life will be a failure, for that's all he lives for."

"Oh, that's pathetic. Surely you don't mean it, though. I should think he was a very human person, and very fond of you."

Anna flamed up at this.

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"I don't know why you say such things!" she cried. "I told you I didn't want to talk about it. You are just trying to torment me——"

"No, dear Anna—only I want to know whether you love him."

Nicholas, looking very boyish with the sudden gleam of excitement in his eyes, leaned forward and took her hands.

And she, already breathless and almost weeping, now surprised by his touch and nearness, was swept completely out of herself. Submerged in the swell of her first great irresistible emotion, she felt herself going—she was only able to say, "I love you."

"I hoped so," Nicholas said quietly.

He felt at least that he had known it, and that he could not have rested without making her say it. But the ecstasy of the moment was all hers. It possessed her, she was dizzy with it. The vastness of the thing she had done, the emotion, so infinitely beyond her experience, that had forced her to do it, overwhelmed her. She sat looking at him solemnly, unconscious now whether he held her hands or not, unconscious of herself for the first time since her childhood.

"It's true, I do," she went on in hushed tones. "But I don't say it to claim anything from you. I know you don't care for me as I do for you—you couldn't. I'm not—interesting enough. I couldn't have all of your life even if you did care for me. But you could have all of mine, if it had come about that way. But I know, I know it can't be. I don't expect anything at all. I know I shall lose you, I can't hope for anything else—but I'm glad I love you."

"And I'm glad," murmured Nicholas.

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He bent to kiss her fingers, and she, with a gesture of passionate tenderness, laid her left hand on his head. And Nicholas noticed again as he kissed her fingers, their plebeian shape, which all her careful keeping could not dissemble. Then against this folly of taste what was deeper in him rose up in rebellion; and with the impetus of the instant's conflict he cried, "That's what I care for more than anything else in the world—that you should love me! It's worth anything in the world, dear Anna!"

Her heavy eyelids, quivering with delight, closed and opened slowly, showing the gathering tears.

"Oh, I would have loved you," she sighed. "I would have taken care of you. I would learn everything you liked, and anything, anything in the world I could do—and I should have been so happy——"

"Then why shouldn't we be happy?" Nicholas asked, really dazzled now by her beauty, alive and alight as he had never seen it. "I don't mean to lose you, depend on that."

"No, no," she said, getting up and moving away from him. "How could it be so? You must see, it can't be. You have your own life, different from mine, you couldn't be bound to me—and so we must be apart—but I shall always, always love you."

And still in her mood of exaltation she was ready to devote herself absolutely, to renounce him. She was even eager at the moment to do it, for so the vague and bright splendor of the vision was untouched by a material shadow. So her great avowal stood for what it was—a simple, complete gift. At the moment she felt that she could live the rest of her life and need no other happiness.

"You could be everything to me—everything that really counts," said Nicholas, coming toward her.

She still retreated, looking at him with misty eyes, and shaking her head. "No, no—it's impossible—I can't believe it!" she said vehemently. And laying her arms along the top of the false book-case, she put her head down, hid her face.

Nicholas followed, more and more determined. Her emotion moved him deeply; he felt gratitude, tenderness for her, and a strong wish to appropriate her. Moreover, the necessity for overcoming evident obstacles stimulated him, helped to make him sure of himself by rousing his will. And a certain inward conflict, of which in face of any emotional situation he was always conscious, gave an added impulse to action. In order to get any satisfaction that his simpler self demanded he had always to crush down a certain protest, a depreciating comment, persistent questions; and this gave to the expression of his elemental side a force, at times a violence, that was really not in his character.

He was rough because he had to carry his point, not only against circumstances, but against himself. And at this moment he was elated, too, because he was facing the first serious business of his life, because he was going boldly into an affair of which he could not see the end—which, so far as he was concerned, would very likely have no end—which would certainly involve penalties of care and responsibility that he had hitherto been free from. In spite of his many relations with women, Nicholas was more inexperienced than Anna herself. He had never come up sharply against any important angle of life, until

now. And now the sudden shock of it, the feeling that here was something gravely significant which was not to be got out of, immensely exhilarated him. It was the feeling of life itself that gave to his look, his manner, and voice an extra energy, a novel brilliance.

He put his arm about Anna, lifted her bowed head, and said with authority, "Come—sit down here, and listen."

She acquiesced, drew away from him quickly, took the chair he placed for her, and sat erect, with her hands folded and her eyelids drooping, as though half-entranced. Nicholas seated himself, facing her squarely, bent forward and looked earnestly at her.

"We must settle now what is to be done," he said firmly.

"Oh," murmured Anna, lifting her shining eyes, startled in the midst of her dream, and shrinking, with a protesting gesture. "Don't—don't say anything, just now."

But Nicholas, bent on seizing the practical situation, difficult as it was, insisted.

"We must, dear Anna, if you feel as I do." And he went on rapidly, overpowered by the impulse to commit himself, to bind himself: "I want you, I want to live with you, now and always. And the only question is, if you care for me in that way—whether you would marry me, if you were free."

"You know I do," she said, with a passionate, brooding look. "But don't—don't talk about anything else now. I am so happy. I never imagined anyone could be so happy. I don't want to think of anything but that. It is so wonderful."

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And she folded her hands, and her eyes closed slowly in a rapturous revery and opened again upon him full of the dream of love. But Nicholas, though he was half-enchanted, was not happy. He could not be anything but restless in face of the difficulties in his way. Ruthlessly he wanted her to feel them too. He wanted some immediate practical plan, some definite settlement, and he said as much, brusquely.

Then Anna in sudden distress rose and moved away from him again, went to the window and stood with her back to him, silently crying.

"Anna! What is it, what have I said? Don't take it that way, for heaven's sake. I must be a clumsy brute——"

"Oh, why do you make me think of—everything now!" she protested. "How did you expect me to take it? Everything—everything else is miserable, and when you make me think, I'm miserable too—perfectly wretched!" and she sobbed more violently as Nicholas tried to quiet her.

"I know it's a bad situation," he argued, "but just for that reason we ought to face it and get out of it as soon as possible."

"It isn't so easy to get out of it."

"No, but it's quite possible. And it must be done. You agree with me there, don't you? There must be a divorce, and then we shall be married."

At this brutal masculine rending of the shimmering veil that had hidden for a time the harsh realities of the "situation," Anna became quiet and sombre.

"You agree with me there, don't you?" said Nicholas more gently.

"I don't know," she murmured.

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"It's the only way out—the best way, for everyone concerned—for Devin too."

Anna colored, and turned her head away, looking out into the black night where the rain was now pouring down in torrents.

"Better for him, for you don't care for him, and he may find someone who will."

"Yes—he may," she said dully.

"Then you do agree with me as to what must be done."

"I suppose so."

She spoke with such evident constraint and feeling as to surprise Nicholas. He had not suspected her of sentiment, nor of feeling, outside certain limits. He recognized now and respected something new in her.

This new power of feeling came from the fact that Anna loved *him*, and was stirred to whatever depth she had; but now she was thinking of Dan.

"You see, he is very fond of me," she said in the same dry tone. "As fond of me as he can be of anyone. I don't believe he cares at all for anybody else in the world."

"I know," murmured Nicholas. And after a silence he added as though to himself, "Life is sad. I pity everybody—Devin, you—the whole world."

But at this Anna turned suddenly and threw herself on his breast.

"Don't let it be sad—don't pity me—I can't bear it! I won't have you speak so! I am young, and I want to be happy—I will be! And we can be happy together, for I love you—I love you more than all the world! And you will love me a little, won't you?"

And she clung to him all the closer, at the thought that he had not said he loved her.

XIV.

THE day after Christmas—a gray day, which would have been very cold if it had not been so quiet—Manlove was on the station platform at Ralston to meet the two-o'clock train, and Dan, who was returning after a week's stay in Cheyenne. Dan had telegraphed, asking Manlove to meet him, if any business should take him to Ralston that day. But a dozen indifferent passengers had descended, the signal for departure had been given, the train began to pull out slowly; and Manlove was turning away, when he saw Dan on the platform of the last car—the private car of the president of the road. Dan dropped off as the car slid by, and greeted Manlove briefly. He was wrapped in his heavy mountain-coat, with the collar turned up about his ears.

“Got anything to do here?” he asked. “If not, let's get that stage.”

“All right, I'm through my business.”

Manlove gathered up a number of parcels, and they walked down the main street to the hotel, from which the stage started daily at half-past two. It was standing now in front of the hotel—a big four-horse vehicle, rather old and rusty, but powerfully built. There were already three passengers in it, and the usual group of bystanders hung about to see the start. Dan had nodded to several men during the short walk, and now as he was about to get into the

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stage he was stopped by the editor of the local afternoon paper, who happened to be passing.

"Glad to see you back, Devin! Didn't know but you'd gone East with your millionaire friend. Have you seen the *Republican* yet? Well, I'll get you a copy—it gives you a good send-off, editorially, and in fact the whole paper I think will interest you. It's unusually newsy. Hi, boy!" And the editor put two fingers to his mouth and whistled shrilly. A prosperous-looking urchin on the corner, who was apparently much more interested in the proceedings of a Salvation Army band than in selling his papers, obeyed the call. The editor, who was a large man with an oratorical mouth, frowned at him.

"Boy, you'd better look alive if you want to do business with the *Republican*," he said sternly, handing over a nickel, which was the price of the paper—pennies not having made their appearance as yet in Ralston. Then he unfolded the four-page sheet, still damp and sticky from the press, and re-folded it with the editorial page outside. "There you are," he said complacently, pointing to the main editorial, which was entitled "The Iron Horse." "You'll find there a suggestion that may interest you—a suggestion, sir, that your services to this community are worth a public or political reward." The editor looked round importantly at the by-standers, who had presumably already read the editorial.

Dan smiled perfunctorily. "All right, thank you, Wharton—I'll read it going over," he said. "I believe I'll get in now out of this wind." And he shivered in his heavy coat.

"But, man, there's no wind! You've got a chill,

that's what's the matter. You've got a bad cold. Come along in and have a nip of whiskey before you start—it'll brace you up for the ride."

"I believe I will—I *have* got a chill, I guess," Dan said wearily.

Manlove was asked to join but declined, and the editor led the way into the hotel bar and ordered two whiskeys, for which he paid, throwing down a gold-piece with a large gesture. Dan was not a frequenter of bars, but the editor was, and he talked familiarly, while they were despatching the drinks, to the bar-keeper (who was a son-in-law of the hotel-keeper, who kept a standing advertisement and got many free puffs in the *Republican*) and to the other citizens in the bar. Dan was unusually silent, and the editor referred explanatorily to his cold, and strongly recommended a mustard-bath and four fingers of whiskey at the journey's end.

The place was warm, and the arm-chairs near the stove looked inviting to Dan, who threw back his coat and began to feel how tired he was. But when the blast of a horn without heralded the departure of the stage, he pulled himself together, conscious of work to be done, and went out. The editor bade him farewell with a hearty hand-shake.

"Look in when you come to town—and let me know what you think of the editorial," he called out as the stage started.

Dan and Manlove exchanged a few words with the other passengers bound for River City, but it was becoming difficult for Dan to speak at all. He breathed with difficulty; and one hand, thrust into the breast of his shaggy coat, clutched at his chest.

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"I'm sorry to see you haven't got rid of that cold yet," said Manlove. "In fact it seems worse than when you left."

"Doctor down there said it was bronchitis, but I guess he didn't know much. Just a plain, ordinary cold. He told me to stay in the house for a week."

"Well, you'd better do it. You don't want to be laid up now."

"No. Don't want to stay in the house, either. I'll get out to-morrow and hustle Banks and those Yon Yonsons a little. Must have ten miles done before——" The pain in his chest interrupted him; he sank back in his corner of the seat with an irritated groan. "Can't talk much just now—it starts this blamed thing up."

He shut his eyes and was silent for some time, breathing heavily. Manlove looked at him with concern. In all his acquaintance with Dan he had never seen him ill, or known him to admit feeling pain or physical discomfort. He was silent, too, though there were many things he wanted to talk over with Dan, whom it was rather necessary nowadays to catch on the fly. Dan had been incessantly on the move ever since his return from the East in October. After the beginning of work on the smelter his active interests had broadened out beyond Grandview and the mines, and his time had largely been given to the railroad project. For six weeks he had been constantly with Josiah Purcell, who had just gone East, after a final conference with the Union Pacific officials; at which the traffic agreement had been signed and also a contract by which the main road was to haul material at a low rate, for the

branch. And Dan's time was further occupied by his growing correspondence, interviews with the various contractors, and all the infinite details that must be settled before actual construction could begin. Manlove therefore felt that Dan had outgrown their common interests, though he was still of course vitally concerned in the progress of the mining industries. It was difficult now for Manlove to get much of his partner's time or attention. He had expected that during the stage-ride of five hours they could settle some business matters that were important to him, and the same idea had been indicated in Dan's telegram. But for the first time in their relations Dan was obviously unfit for business.

He had fastened down the leather curtain on his side of the stage, and leaned back in his corner apparently dozing, but every few minutes roused by a jolt as the heavy coach rolled over a stone or swung ponderously round a bend in the road. After half an hour or so he sat up with a sigh, pushed back the curtain and looked out. The road now ran close to the river, whose steely gray current was visible between and beyond the straggling willows on its bank. It was a broad and rapid stream, but smoothly flowing. On a bright day it had its own beauty of blue color and flashing ripples; but now it answered to the sombre gray of the sky. Beyond it the farming lands of the valley rose in a gradual swell to the foot-hills of a great range of mountains, fir-clad half-way up, above that bare, and crowned with snow. And on the right side of the river—along which the stage-road ran—there was a narrower strip of valley, then more foot-hills, more mountains.

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Down the valley, from the canyon at its head, poured the river; and up it went the stage, bowling along behind its powerful team at seven miles an hour.

Dan moved suddenly to the other side of the stage. "We ought to be getting sight of those fellows pretty soon," he murmured.

And in fact over a little rise just ahead came into view a long stretch of newly-graded road-bed, nearly parallel to the stage-road, which a gang of Swedish laborers was continuing toward Ralston. As the coach swept past the workmen, all its occupants leaned out to look, with varying degrees of interest and eagerness. Manlove, leaning over Dan's shoulder, studied the strip of light-brown earth reeling past them, with a naïve wonder. Three miles of the track on this end were already graded. And Manlove had secretly disbelieved, all along, in the possibility of the road's being built. His honest, rosy face now wore a characteristic expression of puzzled, rather helpless contemplation. He was a perfectly well-meaning, hard-working man, with an inability, which he ruefully recognized himself, to see very far before his nose.

"They're doing pretty well, I should think?" he remarked tentatively.

Dan shrugged his shoulders. "They'll take a little more driving. This weather can't hold much longer. Must have ten miles done before—ground freezes," he said with difficulty.

And he, too, studied the significant strip of brown soil—the only tangible sign, so far, of all his labor. For the twenty-five minutes that the grade was in sight he did not take his eyes from it.

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It ended at a creek which flowed at right angles into the river, and which the stage crossed on a wooden bridge. Dan's specifications called for a bridge of stone and iron a few rods above this point, but construction was not to begin till the spring. He moved back into his corner with another quick, gasping sigh, the involuntary expression of his bodily uneasiness.

"Next summer travelling this way'll be easier," he said to Manlove.

"I should say so! An hour in the train instead of five in this old lumber-wagon—it'll make a difference!"

"I guess it will," joined in one of the other men heartily. "We'll see lively times then sure. I calculate to put up some kind of a hotel myself next spring. Grandview'll be booming, too, by the time that smelter's a-working."

"Yes, I noticed something in the paper about your hotel," said Manlove, smiling.

"Ya-as, I thought I might as well put it in," the man said, with a slightly embarrassed laugh. "Talking about good times helps to bring 'em, I think." He was the postmaster at Grandview, and also the local correspondent of the *Ralston Republican*, to which he sent a half-column of news notes every evening. "However, it ain't talking that does the most, I'm bound to say," he added, with a deferential glance at Dan.

In fact, this whole group—the others were the proprietor of the livery and feed stable at River City, the Sheriff, and the owner of a copper mine at Mallory—betrayed, in their talk and demeanor, a constant

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consciousness of Dan's presence. If he had been inclined to talk they would have listened eagerly. Whatever he said would have been food for gossip in two towns, as now his looks, his illness, would be. He represented to these less progressive citizens the big, powerful world beyond their valley. He was hand-in-glove with Eastern millionnaires—would doubtless be one himself. His figure was the most interesting, locally, on their widening horizon; and the widening, they recognized, was due to him.

His appearance, too, marked him off definitely from them all, even Manlove. He was muffled now in a rough coat that any one of them might have worn, but he wore it with a different air. And his profile, visible to them between the edges of the high coat-collar, had a power and a significance which were perfectly alien to the resident type. He had changed much, indeed, in the last few months. The now decided gray of his thick hair made the heavy black eyebrows a more emphatic and striking feature, and with the deepening of all the lines of his face, gave it a certain ominous distinction. Resolute self-possession and dogged will spoke in the folds of his brow and the rigidity of his mouth. His expression had gained in strength at the cost of mobility and exuberance.

Physical pain had now somewhat intensified this look of stress; his face flushed dully as fever came upon him after the chill. The motion of the stage, the effect of the whiskey, helped too to make him heavy and hazy as to mind; but with a final effort to throw off this drowsiness he sat up and took the Ralston newspaper from his coat-pocket. The

editorial headed "The Iron Horse" was over a column in length, and Dan read it all; with, however, only a vague consciousness of phrases like "the march of civilization" . . . the far-sighted enterprise and sagacity of one of our leading citizens . . . the great future before the people of our district . . . hail the day when the Iron Steed, again harnessed to our civic chariot, shall whirl us onward to Prosperity. . . . Reward of the energy and enterprise so signally displayed by our—we may say fellow-townsmen, since Ralston divides with her sister-settlements the distinction and benefits of his residence . . . Councils of the party . . . name of Daniel Devin has been mentioned as a possible successor to our present Congressman, who, it is known, will on account of ill-health not be a candidate for re-election."

Manlove watched Dan's face as he folded up the paper and returned it to his pocket, and then asked in a low tone, mindful of the listeners: "Well, what do you think of that?"

"Oh, Wharton is a fool," Dan responded contemptuously. "If he had any influence he'd spoil anything he took up. He jumps in like that because he knows he's an outsider. Not that it matters. I don't want it."

And, looking quite immovable, he sank back again, resigning himself to intervals of dozing and of sudden waking. Nevertheless, some of those phrases kept recurring dimly in his mind; and as sleeping and waking images merged together, Dan seemed to hear some particularly rotund period rolled out in Judge Colfax's great voice. The Judge was offering him

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the nomination for Congress . . . they sat in the library before the fire of hickory logs . . . the Judge lifted his glass and proposed a toast . . .

And as with a great jolt the brakes came down on the wheels and the coach slid down a steep little hill, Dan woke and stared confusedly at the gray landscape, with a pang of more than physical distress.

From this onward the road was rougher, the valley narrower, the river more rapid, and more noisy. But for the rest of the journey Dan was completely silent, and indeed slept, except when the recurrent pain disturbed him.

It was dark when they came to the other strip of graded road-bed—of which two miles from River City had been done—and the men had stopped work for the day. But Manlove and the group of four knew when they had reached the spot—could even tell how much had been done that day, measuring from the great boulder yonder in the river-bed. They talked in subdued tones, glancing continually at the sleeping man.

At half-past seven o'clock they swung into the single business street of River City, along which rows of oil-burning street-lamps and the open fronts of shops and saloons broke the pitch blackness of the night. The plank sidewalks were rather crowded, and each shop and each saloon had a group about the door; for this was the social after-supper hour, as well as the time for the arrival of the stage. Loungers were most numerous on the steps of the Weaver House, as the one "hotel" of the place was called; and here the stage stopped, amid a great clatter and snorting of the four horses, and a shout of greeting

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from the crowd. There were a good many men also in the hall of the hotel, and in the bar, which opened to the left. On the right was the parlor, a room with a melodeon, lace curtains, and plush furniture—not often used, for guests as a rule preferred the bar. But a sign of recent festivity was now visible in the middle of a circle of plush chairs—a Christmas-tree, with hanging ropes of tinsel and popcorn, and half-burnt candles.

A noisy recognition greeted Dan as he walked through the hall and went into the office, followed by Doc Weaver, the proprietor, and Manlove.

"Any mail?" he asked.

"Sure," replied Doc Weaver amiably, extracting from a pigeon-hole behind his desk a double handful of letters and two telegrams. "These came to-day," indicating the telegrams. "We had four others wired to you at Cheyenne. You got 'em all right?"

"Oh, yes."

Dan started upstairs with his letters.

"You don't seem to be feelin' just right—better let me send you up some grub. I'll tell Milly. I reckon she's been fixin' up somethin' for you."

"No, no," said Dan impatiently. "I'll come down. Only have something hot, will you?"

"Sure."

"Can I do anything for you?" asked Manlove.

"Do anything? No, I guess not. See you at supper."

Dan went on upstairs to his own room, and Manlove to the one assigned to him by Doc Weaver, who himself proceeded to the dining-room to interview Milly.

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The door of Dan's apartment was unlocked, keys not being much used at the hotel. The room was very warm—hot, in fact. A small stove in one corner was full of glowing coals. The red rep curtains were drawn over the windows, and the green-shaded reading-lamp was lit. It was the best room in the house and by far the best furnished—indeed its curtains had been plundered from the dining-room, its upholstered rocking-chair from the parlor, and its fur rug, which was very much in Dan's way, from Doc Weaver's private office. It had, moreover, been newly swept and garnished against Dan's return, the news of which, communicated by his telegram to Manlove, had speedily reached the hotel; but now on coming into it, he had only a vague general sensation of comfort.

He threw off his overcoat and hat and dumped his mail down on the table, where papers and pamphlets were arranged in neat piles. There were also a number of other articles on the table, which had not been there when he left—a pink tarletan bag of candy and one of popcorn; a row of little Christmas-cards with landscapes in glittering snow, birds, and various inscriptions on them; a large glass inkstand with a silver top, and a calendar, very large indeed, with a cover elaborately painted with flowers, and tied up with a blue ribbon and a sprig of holly. But Dan at first did not notice these. He was turning over his letters, looking for one which he did not find. Anna had not written to him for more than three weeks. From Cheyenne he had telegraphed to her, asking if she were well. And she had telegraphed back that she was and would write, but the letter hadn't come.

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Dan let his other letters lie and took off his coat, collar, and tie, intending to get ready for supper. Hot and cold water were ready to his hand in two large tin pitchers. But he was stiff and aching in every muscle, and intensely depressed. He dropped into the rocking-chair, and his tired eyes rested for a moment on the little gifts, his share of the Christmas-tree. The inkstand was presented by Mrs. Manlove—in recognition of a great many gifts to her children. The Christmas-cards were from some of the school-children, to whom Dan had presented the tree. The calendar bore no inscription, but the donor might be identified by the resemblance between its handiwork and that of various other objects scattered about the room. There was, for example, a scrap-basket made of stiffened twine, with flowers worked on it in ribbons. There were two water-colors on the wall, of roses and heart's-ease respectively. There was an apparatus consisting of tongs, shovel, and bellows; the tongs and shovel having gilded handles, and the bellows a bunch of roses painted on its leather side. There was, finally, a case for shaving-paper, with a similar floral design, hanging by the bureau. But, as it happened, Dan had never attached any personal significance to these articles, any more than he had to the curtains, the rocker, or the fur rug. Therefore the calendar made no impression on his mind; which indeed for the moment was no more active than his very weary body.

The heat and glow from the open door of the stove, the sudden change from dark and cold, had made him irresistibly sleepy. But the pain in his chest still kept rousing him. He would doze and wake gasping,

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but with not enough energy to get up, as he kept intending to do.

A knock at the door finally woke him and he tried to call out, in vain. After a moment the knock was repeated. He lifted himself and went to open the door. Milly Vawter, the housekeeper, was there, carrying a tray covered with a napkin.

"I've brought up your supper," she said, walking past Dan and setting the tray on the table. She had no smile or other greeting for him this time.

"But I'm coming down—all nonsense," said Dan.

"Excuse me, you're not," said Milly. She looked hard at Dan's flushed face and dull eyes. "You're not fit to be out of bed," she added severely. And pushing the letters and the Christmas-gifts to one side with an angry gesture, she began setting out the white china plate, cup and saucer, the worn, plated "silver" and various small covered dishes, glancing all the while at Dan, who was laboriously getting into his coat.

Milly was a small woman, very slender, very erect, with short dark hair, bright eyes, a vivid color, and a defiant way of carrying her head. She looked about thirty; her face was rather worn, yet full of vitality. Her eyes gleamed and her lips were sharply compressed as she finished laying out Dan's supper.

"There's hot milk toast, ham an' eggs, cold pork, tea, biscuits, and canned peaches," she said with her exasperated air. "Better eat the hot things right away, while they *are* hot."

"Thanks, I will—just leave 'em there, will you," Dan said hazily.

He was leaning against one of the posts of the high,

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old-fashioned bed, in such a way that she could not see his clinched fist pressed hard against the spot in his back where the pain stabbed him. But another sign of distress was not to be concealed—his quick, labored breathing. He frowned, waiting for her to go. He had no intention of eating, and Milly saw that.

"Isn't there anything else you'd like—if you could get it?" she asked, lingering.

"Not a thing, thanks. More there than I want."

"You don't want anything. You're sick, Mr. Devin. Don't tell *me*. I can see it. You must have a doctor—if you can *get* one."

"No, Milly, I won't have it! I'll be all right in morning . . . hot bath . . . whiskey sling . . ."

"You're a sick man, Mr. Devin! It's your business to see a doctor. I'm going to have them telegraph to Ralston, I don't care what you say."

Dan sat heavily down in the chair again. "Ask Manlove to come up," he said.

Milly went over to him, hesitated a moment, then lightly touched his forehead.

"You're burning with fever! Have you got a pain in your side? Does it hurt you to breathe?"

"No."

"You're sure? Sure you haven't a bad pain in your back or side?"

"Sure. I'm all right. Just send up some hot water, will you? I'll go to bed, I guess."

"All right, you'd better."

Milly went reluctantly out of the room, with backward, suspicious glances. But the door once closed

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behind her, she ran swiftly downstairs and into the dining-room, her light tread echoing through the flimsily built and almost empty house. In summer the place had usually a number of visitors, and accordingly it was arranged for summer, with bare walls and bare floors or slippery matting. The dining-room was like a chilly barn. Its muslin curtains were folded away, three of its four long tables were blankly vacant, and at the fourth, under the bleak glare of a kerosene lamp fastened to the wall, Manlove, Banks, and a few other men were taking a hasty meal. Doc Weaver lounged beside the table, talking to them and doing what waiting on them was necessary. He had long since ceased to protest against having to do a part of Milly's work while she attended on Dan. She had resented his first grumblings too fiercely. "Supposing I *do* take extra pains with his things, ain't he the best customer you've got?" she cried. "Don't he keep the best room all winter and pay more for it and give less trouble than anybody you ever had in it? You don't know your own business." And Milly's employer had not resented this remark. In fact it was generally considered that he could not get on without Milly. It was known that he had offered to marry her, when the death of Mrs. Weaver promoted the summer waitress to housekeeper—doubtless with the idea that he would thus be able to manage her better and pay her less. But obviously Milly preferred her present position. She came into the room now with an air of authority.

"Mr. Manlove," she said imperiously, "I think you'd better telegraph to Ralston for a doctor. Mr Devin is sick, and I believe he's got pneumonia."

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"What? What makes you think so?" demanded Manlove, pushing back his chair.

"My mother died of it, and I took care of her. He's got a raging fever and he can hardly breathe. I'm sure it's that. But don't stay here talking! Go and send the telegram. You better telegraph to the hospital in Ralston. Tell them to send the best one they have, and tell them who it's for. He must drive over to-night—even now it'll be morning before he gets here. Oh, what idiots men are!" Tears were in her eyes. "To think he's come back here like this. Couldn't *you* see he was sick?" She turned fiercely on Manlove, who had risen.

"I thought he was sick, but nothing so serious as that," he said in alarm. "The doctor at Cheyenne told him it was bronchitis. I'd better go up and see him."

"Bronchitis! It's worse 'n that. He was sick when he went away a week ago and he's been getting worse ever since, and not a one of you had sense to see it. You ought to have kept him in Ralston, where he could have got a doctor at least."

Milly rapped out her quick staccato sentences, looking with scorn at Manlove, who wrinkled his brow distressfully. All the men at the table had stopped eating and were listening; and Banks, a heavily built man with a brush-like black mustache and prominent blue eyes, was staring at Milly's flushed face.

"I'll go up and see him," began Manlove, moving off.

"You'd better telegraph first! If you don't, I will. You know how he is. He don't like any fuss made, and he'll tell you not to do it. But it's going to be

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done; if I have to do it myself. If it's pneumonia it comes like *that*——” and she snapped her nervous fingers.

“Perhaps we'd better get Simmons first?” suggested Doc Weaver, standing irresolutely on one foot.

“Simmons! I won't have that old fossil in the house. It's bad enough to be in a hole like this, where he can't *have* decent care, without getting a man to murder him. Hurry up, Mr. Manlove!”

With an irrepressible sob Milly dashed into the kitchen, and set her helper, a negro woman, to heating pails full of water. Manlove, pulling on his overcoat, went out with Doc Weaver, and the other men at the table began to discuss the situation; except Banks, who stolidly went on with his supper.

“I'll just run up and have a look at him first,” Manlove said, glancing over his shoulder. “Women are apt to fly off the handle, you know, and get scared when there's no need——”

“All right, but don't let her ketch ye,” was Doc Weaver's advice. He prudently disappeared into the office, but looked out a few minutes later when Manlove came down. “Well?”

“By George, I don't know! He says there's nothing the matter with him and that he won't have the doctor. He wants to see Banks in about half an hour. He's going to take a hot bath and some whiskey and go to bed, and he says he don't want to be bothered. But—he *does* look sick. I'm afraid it's worse than he wants to admit. I don't know what to do.”

Banks came out into the hall, wiping his mustache with his napkin, and several men in the bar came forward. “Well, what is it?” asked Banks.

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"I don't know," said Manlove helplessly. "He wants to see you in half an hour. But I don't know whether to telegraph or not."

"You heard what Milly said," remarked Doc Weaver. "I reckon you better telegraph. She'll skin you if you don't."

"Well, I guess I'd better. After all, if it *should* be pneumonia, it's pretty serious. He told me not to, but—I guess I will. She's right, you know, about Simmons. I wouldn't have him doctor a horse for me—no offence to *you*, Doc." And Manlove bolted in some confusion, for Doc Weaver—a former veterinary surgeon—was touchy on the point of his profession. Manlove, his childlike eyes fairly bulging with anxiety, ran diagonally across the street to the white-frame building which housed a Dry-Goods Emporium, the post-office, and the telegraph station.

Doc Weaver was instantly assailed by questions from the men in the bar and the others who came out from the dining-room. While he was parrying these inquiries in his drawling voice, made more indistinct by the habitual tooth pick in the corner of his mouth, Milly called sharply to him and he went hastily.

"I want a bottle of whiskey—the best you've got. And I want somebody to carry up water for his bath—George ain't here, as usual, when he's wanted. He ought to have sponge baths to get the fever down—if he'll let us do it. You come up a minute and help me—but first get the whiskey."

"All right, Milly—only don't get excited now—keep your head cool, you know," Doc Weaver advised, edging away.

"Head cool! I'm the only person in this God-

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forsaken place that's got any to *keep* cool!" cried Milly. "Come right along."

And she flew lightly upstairs, holding up her neat pink dress, which, with the white satin stock tied primly round her slim throat, had been assumed in view of Dan's arrival. But Milly was not thinking of her dress, nor of herself. Her eyes were strained and her throat tense with emotion, crushed down in order that she might meet the sudden emergency which fear made visible to her. Hers was the most intense feeling at the knowledge of Dan's illness. But the news was spreading rapidly, radiating from the two centres of the hotel and telegraph office, and in a short time River City knew all that was to be known, and more.

Meantime Dan had bolted his door, in the belief that he was to be left alone. In a small, adjoining room, which had been converted into a bath-room for him, his hot bath was now made ready; and Dan through the door directed Milly to leave the whiskey outside, as well as the egg-nog she brought him, and declined sponge baths or any other ministrations whatsoever. Finally, as she persisted, he growled: "For heaven's sake, go away! I don't want any more bother."

In the ensuing silence he faintly regretted his roughness, but after all it was intolerable to be bothered just now. He felt that he couldn't bear it. He knew he was ill, he was suffering very much, and his instinct was to shut everybody out and to endure it alone, as he was now used to endure. He had an intense dislike of appearing to be ill; and he disliked being waited on, or as he put it, "bothered." Often

he had gone without some convenience, rather than ask for service, even when he knew it would be gladly rendered. And now, as there was no one who had the right or authority to take him in charge, he shot his bolts, with a dull satisfaction, and shut himself in with his hidden pain.

Milly went away crying; but she did not go far. She sat in the doorway of one of the empty rooms along the hall. Presently she saw Banks come upstairs, with his heavy walk, and go into Dan's room. He had a sheaf of letters in his hand—Dan's mail, which had come by the stage. And walking up and down the hall, Milly heard their voices in conference—Banks's bass booming out, and Dan's, weaker, almost a murmur—for nearly an hour. Meantime Manlove came up and reported. He had telegraphed, and they were to send a doctor from the hospital. He would drive over, but it would be at least six o'clock in the morning before he could reach River City. They had asked if they were to send a nurse; and he didn't know how to reply.

"No, I'll take care of him myself," said Milly quickly. "I know a good deal about nursing."

"But you won't have time, will you?" Manlove asked. "If he's really very sick he ought to have a trained——"

Milly interrupted, with an angry gesture.

"Time enough for that to-morrow. I can take care of him till then, anyway, I guess," she said jealously. "Telegraph there is a person here who has done nursing, and they needn't send anyone yet."

"How is he?"

"He's talking to that man Banks."

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"Well," with a sigh, "I'll go and telegraph. And then I'll finish my supper. If you want me, call me."

When Banks finally came out, Milly was near Dan's door. Banks stood with the door half open, and Milly heard Dan say, "I'll see you to-morrow then. Good-night."

"Good-night," said the contractor. "Can I do anything for you?"

"No, thanks. Shut the door, please."

Banks was about to shut it, but Milly intervened.

"I must fix the fire," she said and walked into the room, closing the door after her. Dan was lying in bed, propped up on the two pillows, with letters and torn envelopes scattered about him on the coverlet. He had in his hand, and was re-reading, the long expected letter from Anna. He glanced up, with an eager, abstracted look, and frowned at Milly. "Too hot now," he said.

But Milly put some coal on the dwindling fire, using her gilt-handled shovel, and shut the doors of the stove. The window was wide open, and she shut it, and opened the one in the dressing-room, leaving the connecting door ajar.

"That'll give you plenty of air. It's getting colder. I'll bring you up some beef-tea as soon as it's ready."

"No, thanks, don't want it."

"Wouldn't you like a hot-water bottle, or some more pillows?"

"No."

Dan shut his eyes and moved his head impatiently.

"Good-night," he said.

When at last she had gone, Dan got up and once more bolted his door. Then again he re-read the

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brief note in Anna's writing, which during his whole interview with Banks he had held folded in his hand. Its brevity, its very phrasing—which Anna had meant to make vague and non-committal—had for Dan a definite significance.

She wrote that she wanted to see him, on a matter of importance; she asked when he was coming East. That was all, but it was enough to change Dan's whole mental outlook. His inveterate hopefulness, given even that narrow foothold, sprang up full-statured. He saw in Anna's letter an offer of reconciliation.

What else could it mean to him, since, in spite of the definite break between them, he had never, after all, been able to conceive that they should live all their lives apart? In all the unhappiness of the last three months the feeling had haunted him obscurely that this could not last forever; that something must happen for the better. And this feeling came simply from the emptiness at the heart of his life, from his unbearable loneliness. He did not see how he was to go on living and working with no object in it all; and therefore, in some way, he thought, Anna must come back to him. Even though their life together never could be what he had hoped, still she must come back. For after all, in spite of anything he might have said, she belonged to him; he could not see how he was to live without her.

This feeling had grown stronger as his prospects of material success became more assured. Within the last month he had secured the object for which he had been working: the railroad was a certainty, and his own profits from this undertaking, from the smelter and the mines, were clearly in sight. They

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would be large; he felt himself fairly upon his feet again. And now also he had a definite prospect to offer. He could make Anna comfortable; she would be able to have the sort of home she wanted; and thus the basis of her complaint against him would be removed.

It was not, however, clear in his mind just how this obvious reason for Anna's returning to him was to be presented to her. Silently he had hoped and waited for some word from her—some sign of regret, or repentance. Little wonder, therefore, that he seized upon her letter—the expression of a wish to see him, the evident desire for some change in their relations—as the sign he had longed for. The truth of the matter was not within the reach of his imagination. No fear or jealous idea occurred to him, for the reason that to him Anna was still simply his wife; and what in a flash had seemed a possibility—on that last night in New York—never really lodged in his mind. He could not imagine Anna capable of deviation, or change from what he had known of her character.

He immediately began to plan to get away, to go to New York. It was a favorable time, for work must soon stop on the road-bed, until the spring. An unusually mild season had permitted the grading to be begun, but with this storm the winter doubtless would close down upon the valley; and it would be three months before that work could be resumed. There remained, for the most important things, the letting of contracts to lay the track, and to build the necessary bridges across various small streams—but he could see his way clear to taking two weeks off—

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say a week or so hence. He resolved to telegraph Anna to that effect.

And having settled this, the first excitement of it passing off, he became keenly sensible again of his bodily discomfort. He felt—for the first time with some alarm—that it was increasing, and that something serious had got hold of him, an unknown and hostile force. He summoned the strength of his will to fight it. He could not afford to be ill, now of all times.

He regretted, as he tried to find some ease in rearranging his pillows, in lying down or sitting up, that he had not stayed in Ralston—except in that case he would not have got Anna's letter so soon. He regretted that he had not let Manlove send for a doctor. The thought that he must endure this pain and obstruction of his breathing, all night, when it might have been eased, was hard. He wished vaguely, also, that he had allowed Milly to bring him the hot-water bottle, or something that might have helped a little. At one time he thought of calling someone, but reluctance to disturb any of them prevailed.

If he had known it, Milly was at that moment in the corridor near his door, sitting in a straight-backed wooden chair, so that she might not fall asleep, and wrapped in a heavy ulster against the keen currents of wind that sifted through the cracks of ill-fitting window-sashes. She listened for sounds from his room until two o'clock, and then went up to summon Manlove to take her place. He was to wake her if Dan gave any sign.

But Dan was perfectly silent all night long. He

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moved about in his room, but he did it noiselessly. He could not sleep. He could not stifle the keen pain, nor forget it for a moment. To lie down was impossible; breathing constantly became more difficult. He counted the slow hours by his watch lying on the table. From his uneasy bed he saw the dawn break at last over the hills beyond the river. Then with infinite pains he dressed himself. The stage left for Ralston at seven o'clock. He meant to go to Ralston to see a doctor; but first he intended to inspect the work on the road-bed.

At six o'clock he left his room, passed Manlove, who was slumbering in his chair; and with the remnant of his strength went slowly down the stairs and into the street. Nobody had seen him except the negro woman who was washing the hall floor.

XV.

THE morning was dark, with a troubled sky and a cold wind sprinkling about little pellets of ice—signs of the coming storm. Milly, having overslept by a little the time she had set for herself, came hurriedly downstairs at half-past six, to find Dan's room empty and Manlove still sleeping. A bad ten minutes followed. Manlove, dazed by his violent awakening and by the picture of Dan wandering in delirium, rushed into the street. The old negress, wildly questioned by Milly, was able to point the direction in which Dan had gone: first to the telegraph-office, then on up the street. And Manlove had not run a hundred yards before one of the few men abroad at that hour could tell him the exact whereabouts of his charge. Dan had taken a buggy and driver at the livery-stable, and had left word for the stage-driver to pick him up outside the town on the Ralston road.

Manlove ran on to the stable; and there, while they were saddling a horse for him, the men who were washing down the stage in front of the place gave him their impressions of Dan. He looked pretty bad, they thought, and they'd been struck all of a heap to see him come walking down the street, when everybody knew a doctor had been sent for; but of course it was none of their business to stop him, and anyhow he looked like he didn't mean to be stopped. The horses were being brought out for the stage as

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Manlove mounted and rode off at full speed. He had a mile to go, and ten minutes' start of the stage; and he made the mile in less than the ten minutes, bending low in the saddle to avoid the stinging onrush of ice-flakes, mingled now with snow. The wind, dead against him, was rising every moment; and Manlove smarted, not so much under its actual lash, as at the thought of Dan exposed to it.

In fact, Dan had got out of his buggy, and when Manlove caught sight of him, was standing in the middle of the graded strip of road-bed to the right, looking off across the broadening plain toward Ralston. For another mile the grade was visible, descending slowly, then climbing a gentle rise, at the foot of which stood a group of shanties for the workmen. But the wind rushing up the valley brought a thickening cloud of snow, and the distance began to be obscured.

A small procession carried Dan—quite in his senses and half inclined to be angry—back to the hotel: Manlove driving him in the buggy, then the horse ridden by the stableman, and lastly the Ralston doctor in his buggy, muffled up to his eyes, half frozen and in a reasonably bad temper. He was very young, the doctor, and his important air was qualified by a youthful expressiveness. He glanced at Dan in the hall and ordered him immediately to bed. Then, trying to thaw himself out by the freshly kindled fire in the bar, he vented his displeasure on Doc Weaver, the only person at the moment available.

"What kind of a damned fool is that man anyway?" he demanded. "And why couldn't you look after him? If he's sick enough to bring me over here

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on a journey like this, it strikes me he might have had a little more attention from you. Pneumonia and out in this wind! Ten to one, if he's *got* pneumonia he's done for himself. Blamed idiots people are. Well, where is he?"

Doc Weaver led the way upstairs, and holding himself entirely guiltless, he proceeded, while the doctor was making his examination, to repeat his words to Milly and Manlove, not without a secret feeling of triumph. The two culprits, or at least the chief one, looked pale and miserable enough. Milly was speechless. Accusing herself, she raged still more bitterly against Manlove. If black looks could have made him more unhappy than he was, Milly would gladly have seen him so. But he sat huddled up in his chair—they were all waiting in the hall for the doctor—his head buried in his hands, unheeding her.

Graham, the young doctor, came out with an envelope in his hand, and looked at the little group with some uncertainty.

"Who's looking after him?" he asked abruptly, and added, "If anybody is."

"We are—I am," Milly said. "Mr. Manlove is his friend, and I can take care of him."

"Oh. He hasn't got any relatives about here?"

"No. Do you—mean—he is in danger?" she panted.

"I don't say that. Only there seems to be nobody with any say as to things. He's too sick to know himself. He must have a regular nurse first thing."

"It's pneumonia?" Manlove asked.

"Yes—right lung. He's got a high temperature,

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he's all run down, and his heart seems weak. Got any ice?"

With a panic-stricken exchange of glances they had to answer that there was none in the town.

"Well, telegraph to the hospital, tell them to send a wagon-load of ice right off, and have Miss Steele come by the afternoon stage. Or hold on—I'll write the telegram to her. And you, get up some cold water, will you—as cold as you can—and some whiskey, and a glass and teaspoon. I'd like a cup of coffee, too, and something to eat. Who's Mr. Manlove? This must be for you—it was on the table and he asked me to give it to you."

He handed the envelope to Manlove with a curt, professional air and turned back into the room.

In the envelope were a key and the brief note scrawled to let Manlove know that Dan was going to the hospital at Ralston; that all his business papers were in the top of his trunk, which the key would open; and that if he, Dan, did not return to business within two or three days, Manlove was to telegraph the facts to Josiah Purcell, Marshbrook, Mass.

But as yet Dan had by no means given up. He kept hold of himself, with a dogged resolve not to yield, with a keen consciousness of all that was going on around him. He questioned the doctor, with an almost amused perception of Graham's air of authority and the flurry of nervousness underneath it. Dan put down the nervousness to the doctor's youth and not to the seriousness of his case. He could not believe, in spite of the extreme and increasing physical discomfort, that it was anything very serious. It

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had not occurred to him that he could be very ill. And now, in the present circumstances, it would be too absurd—it must not be allowed.

When they moved his bed into the middle of the room he wished to get up; the alarm on the faces of the men who were called in to move him affected him unpleasantly. However, though he would ask questions, he obeyed the positive orders of the doctor; submitted to the spongings with ice-cold water, took the medicines and the whiskey, and finally even gave up the effort to find out what his temperature was, and whether he would be able to see Banks on the next day or the day after.

Gradually he became less anxious to see Banks, willing even to be quiet. The disease that he had been fighting unconsciously for a week, and consciously for the past twenty-four hours, began to get the upper hand of him. Insensibly the tension of his will relaxed; the mounting fever forced him down; lassitude, weakness, prostration followed quickly. Things began to get blurred. He ceased to think definitely about what had been worrying him. His consciousness was absorbed for the time in those very physical details which he had tried to ignore—the problem of getting breath, of getting a moment's ease, of dealing with that perpetual pain. Then even these became vaguer, as sleep overpowered him.

He was clearly aware that night of the new presence of the nurse—a person in light uniform, with a composed face and strong, cool hands—and of her business-like conferences with the doctor. The two did not always trouble to lower their voices, and he caught

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the drift of what they were saying about him. He knew when they were about to put the ice-pack on his chest, and when a new medicine was given. He felt that they were taking him very seriously, and he meant to find out . . . a little later . . . when he could get some breath and strength to talk with. He was not sure that they were doing the right thing for him. The doctor's youth now presented itself to him as a grievance. . . . He would speak to Manlove about it.

Next morning he learned, from a remark carelessly made by the nurse to Milly, who had come to relieve her—they stood just outside the door of his room—that the trouble was apt to be with the heart.

He did not mind Milly's being in the room. She shared now the curious shadow-like quality that all these people were beginning to have. She was even quieter, more colorless, than the nurse or the doctor. Yet he knew always when she was there. On the afternoon of the second day, when she was supplying the place of the nurse for a time, he made her understand that he wanted something brought to him from the dressing-room. It was, she discovered, a small photograph in the inner pocket of the coat he had been wearing. This picture Milly had not seen before, but she instantly recognized it as a girlish portrait of the same blond woman who figured so splendidly in the large photograph lying in the top drawer of Dan's bureau, and apparently undisturbed in months, except by Milly herself. She laid the small photograph in Dan's hand, and he held it quietly, not looking at it. His eyes rested for a moment on Milly's

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haggard face, and the sight seemed to trouble him. He frowned.

"Are you a little better?" she cried involuntarily. It was the first time he had definitely noticed her; and she thought it indicated some sort of a change.

"I don't know. . . . Am I very . . . sick?" he asked weakly.

"Oh, you will be better soon!" she cried, clenching her hands to keep from sobbing—for physical fatigue and worry had weakened her self-control.

"Tell Manlove . . . better get another doctor . . . !"

Milly glanced at the door. It was a little open, and Graham stood outside. She could hear his voice—he was talking to Manlove.

"Yes, I'll tell him. We'll get one," she said eagerly.

Then she gave Dan his regular dose of whiskey; he took it passively, with a total lack of interest in the proceeding, which indicated his sceptical feeling toward the young doctor's method.

This feeling was shared by those responsible—so far as anyone on the spot was responsible—for Dan's welfare. Graham had not told Manlove that this was his first important private case; but he had said enough to show his own misgivings and uncertainty, and had succeeded in inspiring these in all the persons who were supposed to take their opinions or orders from him.

Manlove and Milly consulted constantly together, and in spite of mutual dislike felt a certain league of sympathy and interest as against the two professionals; for they both, in different ways, loved Dan. It had

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been an humble affection, in Manlove's case expressed in growing admiration and deference; in Milly's, expressed only in service, in a minute care of Dan's rooms and clothes, in a passionate solicitude about his linen, his food, his smallest personal belongings. And this devotion of hers had not gone unrecognized, any more than Manlove's friendship. Dan had never offered Milly money; nor had he offered to kiss her, in spite of occasion and the occasional rosy flash of feeling in her face. He brought her books and magazines and talked with her about them. And Milly cared for him the more for not seeing that she cared.

From Manlove, nearly a year ago, she had learned that Dan was married; from Manlove also, who in the first months of Dan's stay had seen photographs of Anna, she had lately had the assurance that the beautiful blond woman of the picture was his wife. She had built up a whole drama round what facts of his married life she had been able to glean. The change from Dan, as she knew him first, when he stopped at the hotel going to and from Mallory—always in high spirits, vigorous, full of life and energy—to the man, saddened and broken in spite of his business success, who had come back in the autumn, had been a great shock and stimulus to her secret imaginings. She let herself think sometimes that it might make a little place for her in his life. And meantime her main pleasure had been to surround him with her attentions and her handiwork. It had been a keen pleasure to her to feel that he appreciated the rocker and the scrap-basket; while the fact that he preferred a piece of newspaper to an artistically

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clipped oblong of tissue from the shaving-case might indicate that he thought the shaving-case too pretty to be used.

But now all these pathetic contributions to his comfort had been swept away. The curtains and the rug adorned the nurse's room, and the rocking-chair was reserved for her use. The paintings, the scrap-basket, and calendar had been cast into a corner of the dressing-room. And in the bare and bleak chamber of sickness ruled a doubtful authority, to which Dan's sufferings mattered personally as little as Milly's own.

Manlove, suddenly saddled with responsibilities for which he was not especially capable, fell back on Milly for advice. It was certain that Dan's illness would last "more than two or three days"; yet Milly had to make Manlove decide to telegraph to Josiah Purcell. The telegram was sent on the morning of the third day—a little before Dan had asked to have another doctor summoned.

That was the next thing to be arranged. Manlove made the proposition to Graham, and he agreed, with relief more obvious than anything else in his manner. And he added that if they were going to send as far as Cheyenne and get the best man there, they'd probably better have some oxygen too, though he personally didn't think much of that treatment. He then mentioned the name of the man they ought to try to get, and wrote a telegram stating the case to him.

Then Manlove consulted Milly on the question of communicating with Dan's wife. He was rather feebly of the opinion that Anna ought to know that

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her husband was seriously ill, whether there was as yet definite danger or no. On the other hand, Dan had indicated his wish in the matter. Manlove had ventured to suggest to him that Anna should be informed and he had positively forbidden telegraphing her.

"Long journey . . . no use . . . I'll be all right . . . few days," was his assurance.

Manlove had of course guessed on Dan's coming back, alone and markedly changed, from the East, that there had been some domestic disaster. During the first months at Mallory he had talked often and happily about Anna, and his plans for her; since his return he had never spoken of her, except once to say that she was studying music in New York. And if, as appeared, they had practically separated, it was easy to see why Dan did not want her summoned, except in case of absolute necessity.

"Still," argued Manlove, "she ought to know. I don't see why I shouldn't telegraph her that he is ill and that I'll telegraph again if he's worse."

"He said not to telegraph," Milly pointed out sombrely. In her bitter jealousy of the blond wife a large element of contempt found nourishment. It was plain that the wife ought to be here now; it was plainly her own fault if she was not.

"I can't help it. I can't be responsible for everything!" cried Manlove. "I'm worried to death."

Milly shrugged her shoulders. "It isn't my business," she said sullenly.

"Then I'll ask the doctor," Manlove said in desperation.

The doctor's opinion was that if Devin had a wife

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she certainly ought to be telegraphed for. If she had to come from New York, haste was advisable. He might die now before she came.

"What! You didn't say there was danger," cried Manlove.

"I didn't say there wasn't. I asked if he had any relatives within reach. There's always danger for a man in his run-down condition, and with a heart in bad shape. There's every chance, too, that the other lung may be affected on account of the exposure."

And Graham frowned, with a worried and irritated look.

"Can I see him?" whispered Manlove, after a pause.

"Oh, yes, go in—he probably won't notice you."

But as Manlove entered on tiptoe and went to the foot of the bed, Dan's eyes rested on him, plainly recognized him. The sick man, however, made no attempt to speak. He lay very quietly on his pillows, with the ice-pack close against his laboring chest.

"We've sent for another doctor," said Manlove.

Dan nodded and closed his eyes. Manlove's voice seemed to him to come from some place infinitely remote—he felt too weak to answer him.

XVI.

NICHOLAS, returning to his rooms after lunching alone at his club, in a sombre and unsocial mood, was surprised, and not too agreeably, to find his father waiting for him.

"Well! I didn't know you were in town. I hope you haven't been waiting long," he cried, going to shake hands, with his nervous, cordial grip.

"Oh, no, half an hour," Mr. Purcell replied dryly. "I came up this morning on business. Can you give me Mrs. Devin's address?"

"Mrs. Devin's? Yes, I can give it to you." Nicholas pushed up a chair and sat down, meeting gravely the old man's keen glance. "Do you want to see her?"

"Yes, I do, right away."

Nicholas took out a card and a pencil and wrote down the address.

"But you won't find her in now," he said. "She's lunching out at Fairmont to-day and won't be back till late. They're rehearsing some tableaux and things, you know, for New Year's——"

"Tableaux! I should think she might be thinking about something else just now. Look here, d'you know anything about this?" He took out his pocket-book and began searching impatiently among the papers with which it was stuffed. "According to a telegram I got this morning, Devin's down with pneumonia, confound him! Here it is. It must

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have got to Marshbrook just as I left. They telegraphed it on to the office here. Well?"

"I'm positive she doesn't know anything about it. I saw her this morning. I know she had no word of it up to twelve o'clock."

And Nicholas folded up the telegram, and unfolded it and read it again.

"Devin ill pneumonia unable transact business fortnight anyway his orders telegraph you. Manlove."

"Who's Manlove?" he asked mechanically.

"Oh, he's a fool of a man out there in the mines. If this is true, I've got to turn right round and go back out there. But I don't feel like doing it without some further word. That Manlove's like a chicken with its head cut off—I don't take what he says. I've telegraphed back to ask for the doctor's report. But I thought most likely his wife would know more about it. When's she coming back, did you say?"

"Probably on the six-thirty train—it gets in at six-thirty, I mean."

"And no word up to noon, you said? Well, that seems queer. This telegram had time to go to Boston and be sent up here—I should think they'd telegraph her as soon as they would me. Hey?"

"Really, I don't know anything about it."

Josiah Purcell looked over his spectacles at his son with a sarcastic and irritated expression. He had been very much disturbed by the telegram, and now he thought that Nicholas was disturbed by it and was trying to conceal the fact.

"I thought you might know. You and Margaret seem to be pretty thick with her," he said brusquely. "I suppose I might telephone out to Fairmont,"

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"No, certainly not. It would alarm her and it would be absolutely no use. I'm perfectly certain that she knows nothing."

"Well, it's queer. Very likely the telegram is at her house now. I should think she ought to come back."

Nicholas looked at his watch. "It's nearly three now. She couldn't get here anyway before five. What's the use of making the thing worse for her? I'll go up and meet the trains after five, and go to the house with her; and if there's any news I'll telephone to you."

"Well, you telephone me anyway when she gets back. I want to see her. I'll wait here after half-past five, it's convenient to her address. I'm going back to the office now to straighten up things, in case I *have* to go. Confound it, Nicholas, I wish you had some idea of business, you might take this off my hands."

"Yes—it's a pity," said Nicholas. "Here, after half-past five, then."

It was only after the whir of the descending elevator had announced his father's departure that he realized he should have kept the telegram for Anna.

He really was much more disturbed than he had been willing to show; mainly because of the effect on Anna this news would have. He could not be sure that, in spite of what he had said, his father would not telephone to Fairmont. In any case he foresaw a shock, to which she would be especially susceptible in the present state of her nerves.

When he had parted from her that morning at the station—after, it must be said, a quarrel intense if

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not violent—he had thought her almost hysterical. And it was the distress of seeing her so unhappily moved, and of being unable at the same time to move her an inch toward the action he wanted her to take, that had made him leave her there, at the last moment, though he also was expected at Fairmont. The quarrel was an old one—nearly a month old—and they had been at it almost every day. What Nicholas wanted was that she should write the decisive letter which would define their situation and help to clear it up; but this letter to her husband Anna had so far been perfectly unwilling or unable to write, and she could not give any satisfactory reason for the delay. She admitted that it was only a delay, that the thing must be done, and yet she would not do it. As for the temporizing note she finally had written, simply putting off the necessary move for an indefinite time, Nicholas had been angry and disgusted to learn of it. Their disagreement then had reached an acute stage. For the first time Nicholas had given voice to his suspicions. He taxed Anna with not knowing her own mind, not being willing or able to live up to what she had promised him; and he told her that he was going abroad and that he would never see her again until she was free.

His characteristic self-possession, his quiet, unemphatic manner, helped him to deliver this ultimatum with a coolness and conviction that he by no means felt. Anna had believed him. It was then that she came near breaking down; but that she could still control herself was evident in the fact that she went on without him and kept her engagement at Fairmont.

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She did not come back either until the half-past-six train, and Nicholas, who had spent an hour and a half in or near the station, since there were three other trains that she might have taken, was irritated with her until he remembered his errand. He was among the crowd of people waiting at the train-gate; the train was unusually crowded, and Anna passed without seeing him. Indeed, she seemed absorbed in her own thoughts. She walked slowly, with down-cast eyes, and she looked pale and tired. All the more evident was her blush and startled look when Nicholas spoke to her.

"Oh, I didn't expect you," she said, as grave as he.

"No, I didn't expect to come. Something happened. It concerns you, but it's nothing very alarming. Here—I'll tell you in the cab."

But they had to wait a moment for a cab. "Tell me," she said faintly.

"Well, it's a telegram from a man named Manlove—an irresponsible kind of person, my father says—that Devin is ill, laid up for a fortnight or so. I thought you'd better know it at once, though very likely——"

"Ill? I hadn't heard. . . . Where is the telegram?"

"My father has it. It was sent to him at Marshbrook, on account of the business affairs, you see. Very likely it's nothing at all serious—this man Manlove seems to be easily frightened——"

"But what is it? I suppose there will be a telegram at the house . . ."

"So I thought. My father is anxious, too, to know

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if there is any further word. He doesn't believe much in Manlove—thinks he's easily scared. If you don't mind, I'll go with you."

"Yes, yes, do." The cab drove up here, and they got in. "But you haven't told me what is the matter? Didn't he say?"

"The telegram said pneumonia, but——"

"Pneumonia! But that is . . . serious . . ."

"Oh, not necessarily, in the case of a strong man—not at all dangerous, I should think. Besides, we don't know that it is pneumonia. You would have heard before, you know, if he'd been very ill."

Anna was silent—stunned and bewildered. She could not believe that Dan was very ill, but for a reason not known to Nicholas. She had at that moment in her purse Dan's telegram of the day before, and she now went over every word of it in her mind. "*Your letter received all going well shall get away and see you soon. Write me. Yours, Dan.*"

There was nothing in that to indicate illness. On the contrary, it had startled her by its definite buoyancy and cheerfulness. It was like Dan as he had been of old—even to the exuberance of expression and unnecessary expense. And that "*Yours, Dan*"—how could she explain that to Nicholas or even to herself? He had misunderstood her letter, that she saw, and so made things ten times more difficult for her.

She shrank into her corner and looked at the blurred window-pane, where soft blots of snow clung and melted. The first heavy storm of the winter was clogging the city ways. In twenty-four hours there had been rain, sleet, nearly a foot of snow, and now

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rain seemed probable again. The cab was twice its usual time in reaching the house, but neither Anna nor Nicholas spoke again. The walk before the house had been partly cleared; Anna trailed her long skirts in the wet snow as she ran up the steps and rang, too much in haste to use her key.

"Is there a telegram for me?" she demanded of the maid, going on to her room.

The negative answer did not convince her. She looked the room over thoroughly and even turned over the letters on the hall-table.

"Are you *sure* nothing has come for me? Please ask Miss Thaw. It is very important."

Nicholas had now come in. When Miss Thaw appeared in person and it seemed clear that no telegram had come for Anna, he offered to go to the nearest station and inquire; and Anna begged him also to send a messenger to his father to ask for the telegram he had received.

When Nicholas came back, covered with sticky snow-flakes, he had a theory in place of news.

"No doubt it's this way. He's not sick enough to want to alarm you. He telegraphed my father because there is a lot of business on hand, in connection with the road, that someone must manage directly. My father expects to have to start out there to-morrow, unless some different news should come. But I can easily see that a man might be confined to the house and unable to do active business, and yet not be at all dangerously ill."

"But Manlove sent the telegram, not Dan. He *must* be ill—very ill. He wouldn't give up like that if he wasn't. And pneumonia always comes very

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suddenly, doesn't it? Why haven't they telegraphed me?"

She spoke with a stress of feeling that was like anger, totally disregarding his explanation. Her agitation was painful to see. She had thrown off her wrap, but would not sit down, and Nicholas stood beside her in his snow-spotted coat, holding his hat, from which, in the warmth of the room, melted a trickle of water.

"I think my suggestion is probably near the truth," he said.

"Will you call a messenger? I want to send a telegram."

"Yes, or I'll take it—that's quicker."

She threw him a troubled look of thanks, sat down at the table and wrote a message to Manlove: "Wire immediately Dan's condition. Leave to-night unless better news," signing her full name and address.

"I *can* leave to-night, can't I? I'm sure there's a midnight train to the West. And I can get the answer to this in time?"

"That depends on conditions out there. If the message is delivered promptly and he replies at once you ought to get it in an hour or so, I should think. I'll see that it's sent in rush time and that any reply is delivered here at once. And I'll find out about trains."

"Oh, thank you, thank you. . . ."

Her relief at this quick and definite action was obvious. She began to be more composed, and her look at Nicholas said that she clearly perceived that it was he who was helping her, and that she had a right to his help. But continued action was neces-

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sary to her. When he had gone, with a quick nod and grave glance at her, she rang and ordered up her trunk.

In the confusion of her thoughts only one thing was plain to her: if Dan was really ill she must go to him. He could not be left in that rough place to the care of strangers. In decency he was entitled to her care. Her response to that primitive claim of his was as instinctive, as strong, as had been her reluctance to follow out the course determined by her own act, and so to separate herself entirely from him. A vague but powerful fear of the situation oppressed her. The last thing in the world she wanted was that Dan should suffer. While he suffered she felt guilty. For the moment she was passionately thankful that she had not written him as Nicholas had been urging her to write. Now at least she could go to him and do something for him, even though he had not asked her to come. She went vigorously to work at her packing.

Mr. Purcell was announced, and Anna, expecting to see Nicholas, turned with her arms full of clothes, to find a stranger on her threshold. She dropped her burden on a chair, and went forward nervously to greet the little old man.

"I came myself instead of sending the telegram," he said, shaking hands with her dryly, "because I was anxious to see you. The messenger is in the hall. He says he was told to come back."

"Sit down, please," Anna murmured, looking for an unencumbered chair, "and will you please let me see the telegram?"

He took out the large pocket-book with his precise

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and methodical air, found the yellow paper and handed it to her; and he observed her keenly as she stood under the gas-jet and read it. Her beauty rather floored the old man. In her black dress and the large black hat which she had forgotten to take off, she looked majestic, imposing; the stress of anxiety and exertion had flushed her face, made it expressive, dazzling.

"I judge you've had no further word," said Josiah Purcell, as she continued still to hold the telegram and look at it.

"No, nothing," Anna said, and she felt humiliated in having to say it. It added to her misery that this sharp old man seemed to guess her position.

"Well, I wired right out there when I got this at one o'clock for further news. I asked for the doctor's opinion. I don't trust that fellow Manlove to know pneumonia from a cold in the head. He's an idiot. He sent that telegram this morning, but it don't say how long he's been sick or how serious it is. It's mighty sudden. When I left him ten days ago he was as well as usual, and he's been writing me about every day since. You hadn't heard of his being sick?"

"No, I had a telegram from him from Cheyenne a week ago, but he hasn't said anything about his health. I've telegraphed too. I shall leave to-night, unless I hear he is better," and Anna now looked the old man full in the face, proudly returning his speculative glance. "If your answer comes first, I hope you will let me see it."

"Of course—ought to have had it before now," he muttered. "I see you're packing. If I can do anything to help you . . ."

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"Oh, thank you, no—there's nothing to do now, except just wait."

"Well, I'll be getting back. I'm at my son's rooms. If you should hear anything, will you send round there? I'll give you the address——"

"Oh, don't trouble, I know it."

"Ah, all right, then. By the way, have you any idea where he is—Nicholas? He was to come back there."

"Yes, he's gone to send the telegram for me. He'll be back soon. Will you wait?"

"No, thanks, I'll go on. But will you tell him, please, that I'd like to see him when he's at liberty?"

With evident irritation the old man made her a stiff bow, and backed toward the door. But there he stopped and added, "It's settled, then, that we exchange news? Whichever hears first will send to the other. And if I can do anything to help you get off I hope you will call upon me."

Anna had kept the telegram, folding it up small in the palm of her hand; and this was one reason for Josiah Purcell's irritation. He had not liked to ask for its return; but it was a business paper, and his habit was to keep all business papers in due order. Secondly, he was angry at the failure of Nicholas to keep his appointment. And third, the friendship or intimacy which appeared to exist between his son and Devin's wife disturbed him. He disapproved, on theory and hearsay, of Devin's wife. He strongly disapproved any intimacy between married women and young men. Puritan to the backbone, any hint of secrecy or irregularity, any departure from

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the straight and narrow ways of life, roused his anger and contempt.

The present result of all these feelings was to intensify his natural brusqueness of manner, and to produce in Anna a certain terror of him. She was heartily relieved at his departure, and now perceived another reason for starting if she was to go that night. For if she waited till the morrow she would no doubt have to make the long journey in his company. But, indeed, she had already practically decided to go by the first train, with or without further news. The telegram, which she now unfolded and read again, left no doubt in her mind that Dan was ill enough to need her. She had no definite mental picture of his surroundings, but imagined them rather worse than they were; and it was this uncertainty and vagueness about the whole thing that most alarmed her.

She was about to return to her packing when the messenger in the hall reminded her that he was waiting; and she paid and dismissed him. And this reminded her that she had not enough money in the house for her journey. She would have to ask Nicholas to lend her some.

How had such a man as old Mr. Purcell managed to have a son like Nicholas? . . . Nicholas was no more out of her mind now than he had been at any time for two months past. The thought of him was a background to whatever else she might for the moment be thinking of; it was like the air itself, surrounding and penetrating everything. So now, while she was thinking about Dan, the telegram, her train, the journey before her, the question about Nicholas and his father suggested itself, and almost instantly,

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by way of answer, she realized that Nicholas was in some ways like his father. She had been seeing new aspects of him lately. At bottom he was Puritan too, severe and strict in observance of the things that mattered to him, and in the account he required from her. His was a different code from his father's, but Anna was not sure it was an easier one.

She thought of him and of Dan, and went on packing, without much regard to the way she was putting things in; and she had nearly finished when Nicholas returned. He brought the time-table, showing the connections of the midnight train, and Anna with renewed agitation told him of his father's visit and showed him the telegram.

"Yes, I've seen it," he reminded her. "There's nothing new? Then don't you think we'd better have some dinner?"

"I'd forgotten. Will you stay here? Let's go right down, then, so as to be ready if anything comes."

While Nicholas took off his wet overcoat, she disappeared behind the screen, to wash her hands and put her hat straight. Then they went down to the dining-room in the basement, which was already full of people, nearly through their dinner. There was a long table in the centre of the room, and small ones in the corners, where the less social sat. Anna had one of these small tables. Their dinner, when it came, was bad; the soup cold, the fish flavorless and the roast tough; while the hurried negro waiter made a clatter with the dishes, and a nerve-racking buzz of talk filled the room. But they were both indifferent enough to these minor ills. Anna could not eat, and

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made no effort to talk. Her face was painfully flushed, and her growing nervousness was apparent.

"I shall go anyway to-night, whether I hear or not," she said once, and when Nicholas made no immediate comment, she looked at him almost angrily. "Don't you see I must go?" she demanded.

"I can't tell. You must do as you think best," he said coldly. The nervous strain was telling on him, too—the feeling of things unsaid between them. "But," he added after a moment, "I don't think you should start without some confirmation—there may be a mistake."

She looked at him resentfully, appealingly, but was silent. They hurried through the dessert and left before the coffee came; and as Anna got to the top of the stairs she saw another messenger in the hall, the maid just taking from him an envelope.

"For me?" cried Anna, and she snatched it away and went into her room. The envelope was addressed by Josiah Purcell, and contained a brief note and a telegram to him signed by the doctor:

"Serious case pneumonia—vitality low—heart weak—other lung may be affected—have called consultant from Cheyenne."

Anna dropped the paper with a cry and hid her face in her hands.

"He is going to die!" she said loudly.

Nicholas was reading the telegram. He went and shut the door—there were several people in the hall.

"Hush, it is not as bad as that. You must control yourself," he said sharply. "He's a young man, and strong—I don't think it at all likely that he'll die. But if you're going to do any good you can't break down

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now. You have a long journey before you, yet you didn't eat your dinner, and now you're hysterical."

"No—no, I'm all right now," she murmured. "I'm not going to break down."

And with bright spots burning in her cheeks, and aimless, trembling hands, she took up a heap of small articles from the table and threw them into her trunk.

Nicholas regarded her steadily for some moments, then he went over and took her in his arms. "My poor girl, don't look so, you can't help this," he said.

She half repulsed him, with a frightened look; but at the gentleness of his touch and tone she melted, gave way and burst into tears.

"Oh, I am wicked, he will die!" she cried, clinging to Nicholas. "I know he will die, and I deserve it. . . ."

"Hush, Anna—hush, my dear—this changes nothing. We are as we were before. How are you wicked, how is it your fault? Neither of us wanted him to be ill." And Nicholas held her close and kissed her.

"No, we did not want it. But—I can't help feeling so. If it is a punishment for me, I deserve it. And yet I couldn't help it—I couldn't help loving. . . . But I shall never be happy . . . never, never! I shall always feel guilty. . . . Why must he die? . . . Yes, yes, he is dying, you know it. He will never know it now or forgive me . . . and I am afraid"

She bowed herself over his supporting arm in a paroxysm of tears and wild sobbing. And Nicholas with stony composure held her until the violence of her outburst had spent itself. Slowly she grew quiet,

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except for a deep sob at intervals. Nicholas put her into a chair and knelt beside her. She held her handkerchief to her blurred face.

"Let me go with you," he said.

"No."

Her voice sounded exhausted, but expressed a definite meaning.

There was a long silence. The sounds of the house again became audible—the door-bell, talking in the hall, a piano overhead. And outside the street-cleaners were noisily at work clearing away the snow. The clank of their shovels on the cobble-stones of the street sounded in chorus.

After this they talked no more, except about the business of the journey. There was a great deal of it yet to be done—the packing to be finished, the carriage to be ordered, the ticket and sleeping-car accommodation to be bought. Anna had to change her dress, to eat something, to pay her bill. There were telephone messages back and forth between Nicholas and his father. A telegram came for Anna from Manlove with no further news, simply repeating the doctor's report; and she telegraphed back that she was starting.

Nicholas suffered at letting her go alone, at foreseeing the journey before her. He did all he could to lessen the suspense, which was its worst feature; arranging with Manlove that telegrams should reach her at various points on the way. He realized that he could not at all urge himself on her as a mitigation of her discomforts. She must go alone. But he got some consolation from the fact that his father would follow only twelve hours behind her, and would

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naturally manage the practical part of the situation out there, besides keeping him, Nicholas, informed of it.

All else that was not wholly saddening and troubling to him in this sudden occurrence, was the conviction, strengthened by the manner of Anna's parting from him, that—as he had said to her—it changed nothing, in their relations to one another. Anna would be his, whatever happened to Devin. He was sure of that; and it seemed to him right, because inevitable that it should be so; and at the same time life seemed to him harsh and sad.

XVII.

DAN knew that she was coming. On the morning of the fourth day of his illness Manlove read him her telegrams, along with Josiah Purcell's; and she had then been nearly twelve hours on the way, while Purcell was just starting.

Dan was still perfectly conscious at moments when something roused him. Now he realized perfectly the distance Anna had yet to travel, the time that must elapse before she could reach him, and his own growing weakness. And he said to Manlove, in a gasping whisper, "Do the best—you can—for me."

"Yes, Dan. The doctor from Cheyenne will be here to-night. Don't worry, old man—we'll pull you through."

And Manlove went precipitately out of the room. He was unable to bear the sight of Dan's suffering, the sound of his shallow breathing and of the cough that shook him in a vain effort to relieve the overburdened lung; and still more the thought that perhaps the right thing was not being done for Dan tormented him. He felt, as never before, the isolation of this place, where not even the bare necessities for the case were to be procured; the length of time that it was taking the new doctor to reach them might turn the scale against Dan. The nervousness of Graham had by now infected them all with a kind of panic.

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Even Dan was troubled by it. But always after waking to full consciousness of the situation he sank back again, passive—the increasing fever and weakness clouding his brain, veiling and softening familiar outlines.

The ideas that occurred to him had then the quality of dreams—the transparency, the inconsequence—and at the same time they reflected all the feeling he was capable of. The weight of anxiety had not yet slipped off his shoulders; he could not forget that he had much yet to do. There was Anna . . . there was the road . . . the road must be built, and Anna . . . was coming back to him. He must see her . . . he must fight off the pain and the drowsiness till she came. And she was coming as fast as the train could bring her, but still how slowly.

So many revolutions of the iron wheels on the rails . . . pounding, pounding, his heart kept time to the hard, quick beat . . . those rails, for which the contract had just been closed, would cost more than he had expected . . . but still, if the road could be finished in time . . . if he could only get out and make them work . . . it would shorten the journey by six hours. . . .

Then suddenly it seemed to him that the train bearing Anna, the huge engine running over the rails that he had laid . . . with its head-light glaring wide, its great bell clanging . . . was rushing down upon him, was crushing him, crushing his chest . . . and he cried out, choking, and struggled up on his pillows.

The nurse ran to him, supported him in her arms,

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and laid him down again, coughing and gasping for breath. Then it seemed that his heart was dissolving within him; a deadly faintness overcame him; he lost consciousness.

At this, the overtasked heart's first grave sign of collapse, alarm radiated from the sick-room through the whole place. A second urgent telegram was sent to make sure that the Cheyenne doctor and the oxygen apparatus came by the first train.

Dan rallied and became hazily conscious of heat at his hands and feet, of more frequent doses of medicine, and of a weakness that soon lost itself again in sleep. But with the first administration of the oxygen that night he came quite back to himself. The physical relief was immediate and marked; and instantly his mind took up again the questions that had preoccupied it—his hopes and fears revived.

He insisted on talking, gave directions to Manlove to write to his mother—"Mrs. Martha Devin, Shattuck, Wisconsin." "I've only written once since I came back," he whispered regretfully. "Tell her I'll write as soon as I'm better." Then he asked that his lawyer in the town should be sent for next day so that he might make his will—another omission for which he was remorseful. And insurance—that was still another thing that he had meant to see to—certainly, as soon as he was well again he would insure his life.

Manlove promised what was asked of him, with new alarm, wondering if Dan thought he was going to die. If he did, his manner gave no sign of it. So far as spirit could dominate the suffering body he seemed stronger. His desire was to live, he willed

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to live, and the arrival of the new doctor had diffused a distinct atmosphere of hope to which Dan was the first to respond.

He got a clear impression of this man's personality—his tall erect figure, his keen, handsome face, his smile, his curt, positive manner, the gentleness and sureness of his touch. Alone with him, Dan asked what his chances were.

"Ah, you'll pull through all right," the doctor said, with his vigorous smile and his practised way of meeting just such inquiries. So potent was his manner, so buoyant his assurance, that Dan was almost content—was willing at least to resign himself into those strong and deft hands. And the first effect of the oxygen soon passing off, he felt the struggle for breath becoming acute again, and at the same time drowsiness creeping upon him, like a fog, thick and dull.

In moments of full consciousness during the next day he tried to tell the doctor that Anna was on the way, that his wife was coming to him, and he must see her. He tried to say, too, that if he was in danger he wanted to be told the truth.

But the full force of the fever was now upon him, and the second lung had been attacked. The struggle over his tired body had become acute—the incessant effort of the doctors to relieve and stimulate the failing heart. Unable to accomplish its task, the heart—weakened by the year's long strain—was giving way, as they had feared, before the crisis of the disease was reached.

He lay, when they would let him alone, very quietly, in a half-stupor, yet seeing and hearing what

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went on about him. But as life ebbed from him the pain of life went too. The fever and weakness acted as an anodyne, soothing his brain and nerves.

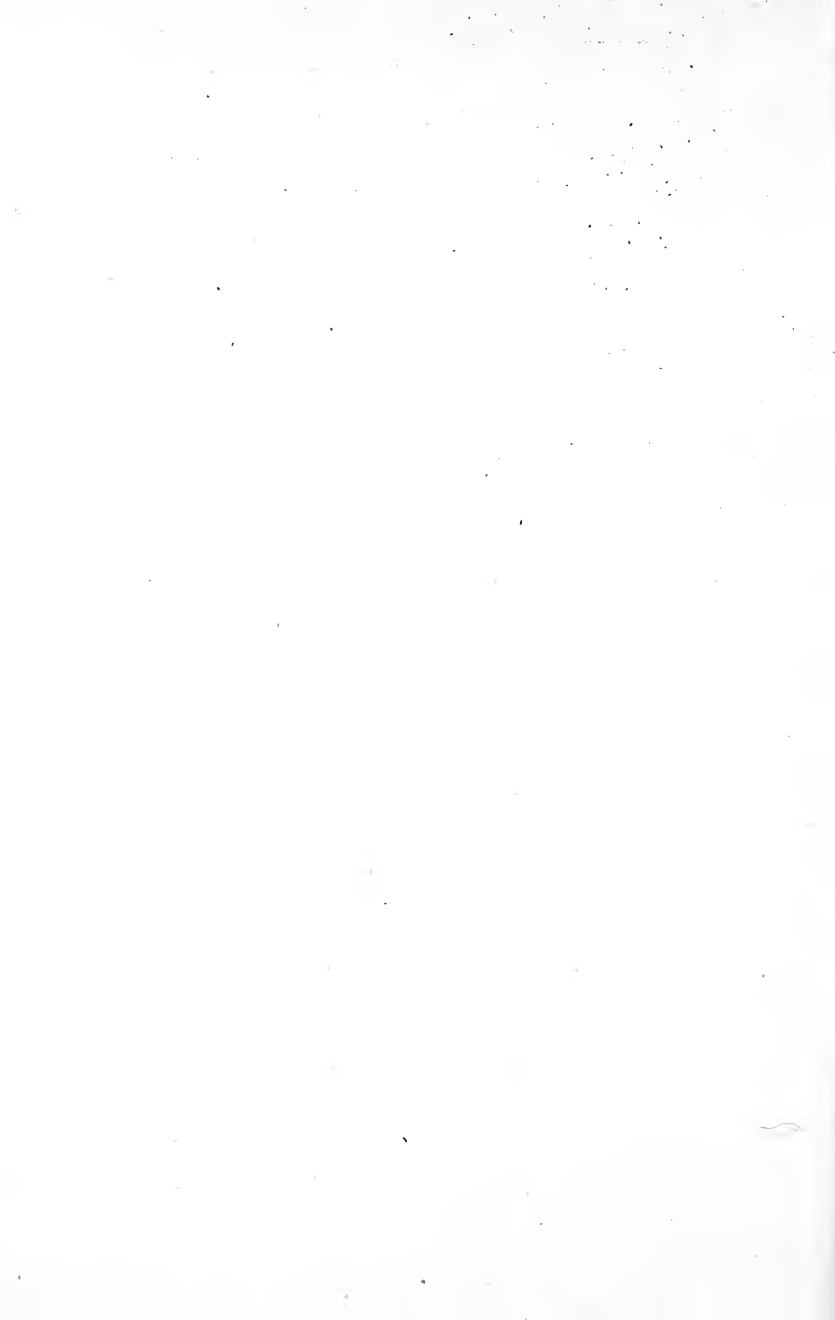
It was only when by means of some powerful stimulant they roused him, that he now suffered. In one such moment he realized what was happening, what was before him. His eyes showed the sudden pang of that realization as they filled with tears.

His life was going out with the old year—the year of his failures and unhappiness. The new year had seemed to promise redemption of all. And from the sense of life unlived, of his own promises unfulfilled, those tears sprang.

“Anna . . .” he murmured. “Anna . . .?”

“To-morrow,” they said to him. “She will be here to-morrow.”

To-morrow? Great waves of a gray and misty sea rolled between him and the morrow; he felt himself lifted high on those waves and sinking deep and deeper into their cold overwhelming mass. He could never pass them; his strength would not suffice for his desire. He saw, and surrendered it. While he was still conscious he became perfectly calm, peaceful. His eyes, which were not to see the completion of his work, nor the face of his wife again, had a contemplative, remote look; as though he turned of himself from the shore already slipping past him, to meet those mists of sleep.



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